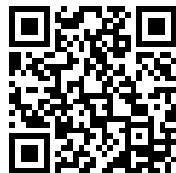


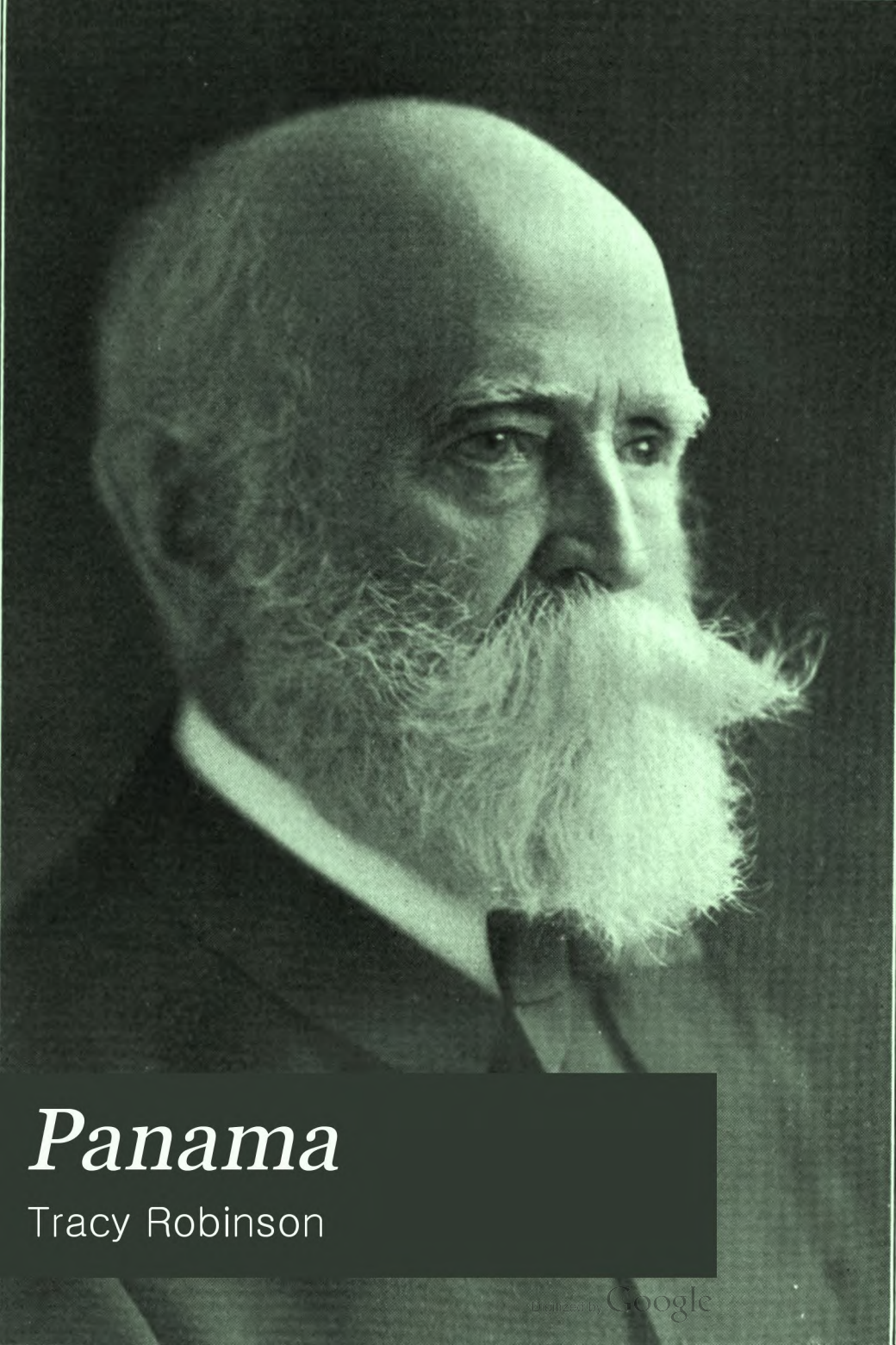
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# *Panama*

Tracy Robinson

*H Jackson.  
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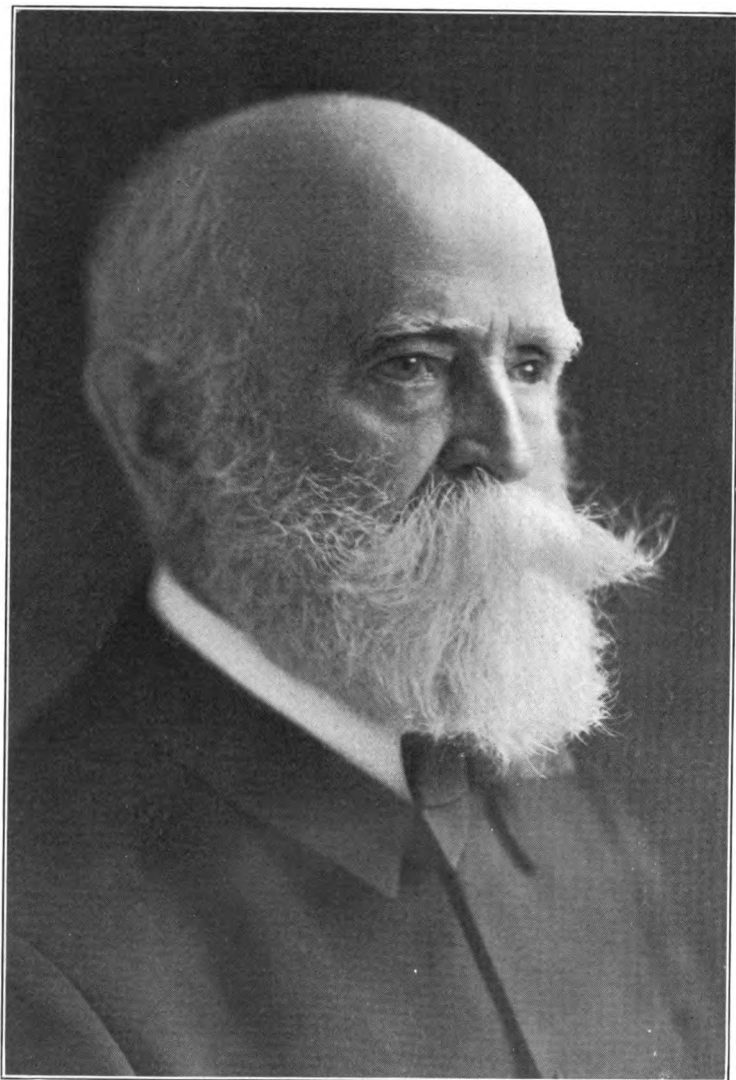












*Photograph by Falk, November, 1907.*

*Tracy Robinson.*

# PANAMA

*A Personal Record of Forty-six Years*

1861-1907

BY

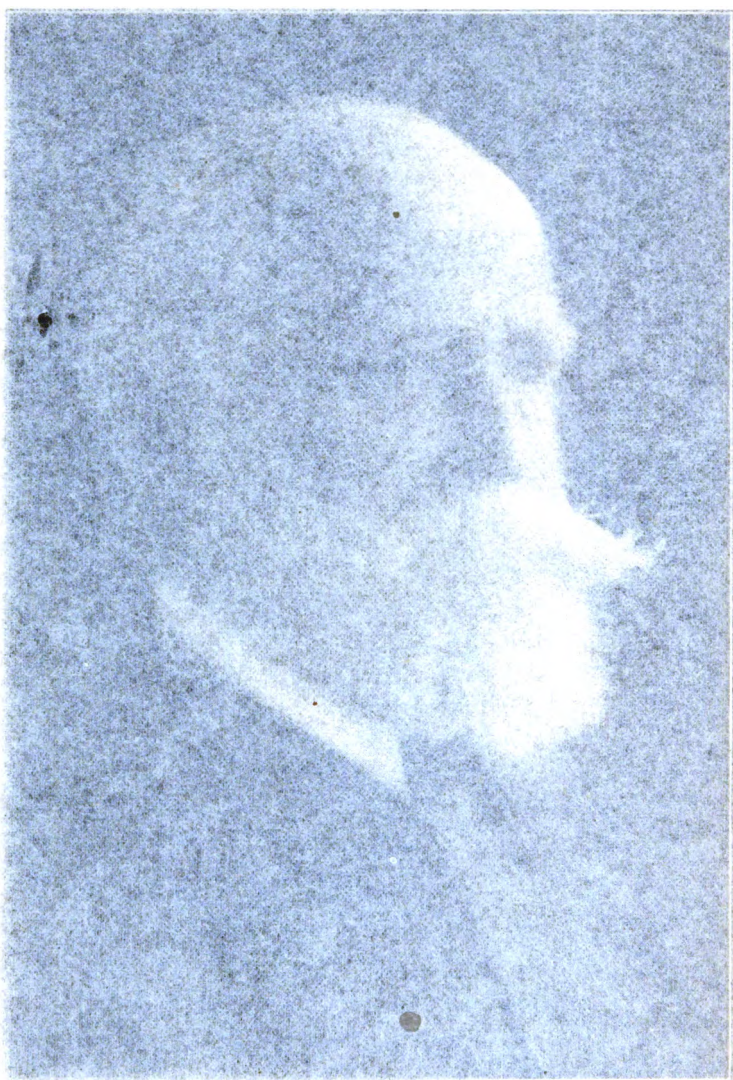
TRACY ROBINSON

PUBLISHED BY

THE STAR AND HERALD COMPANY

NEW YORK AND PANAMA

1907



*John D. Rockefeller*



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*To the Memory of*

*“Other voices—well-loved voices, that have died.”*



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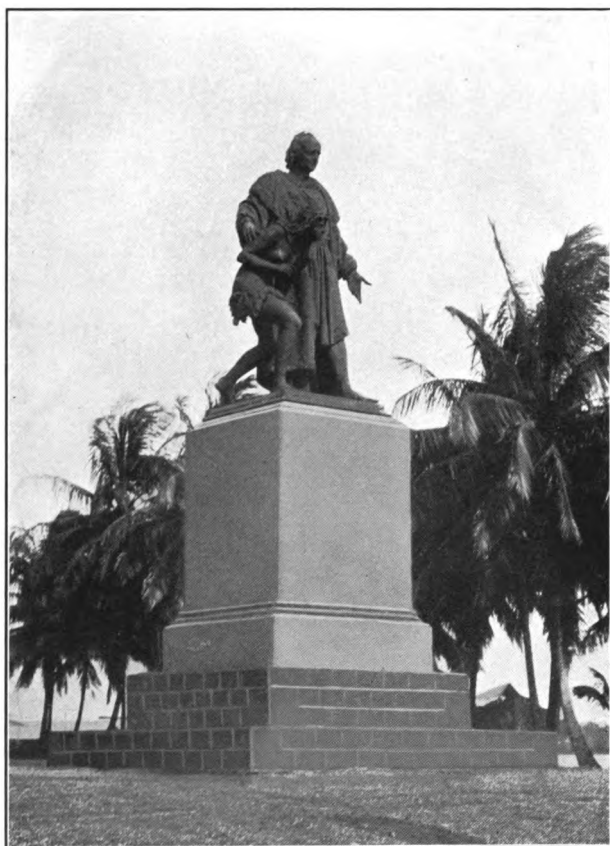
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**BRONZE OF COLUMBUS AND INDIAN GIRL  
AT ATLANTIC ENTRANCE TO THE PANAMA CANAL**

**PRESENTED BY EMPRESS EUGÉNIE TO COLOMBIA AND TRANSFERRED TO  
M. DE LESSEPS**

# PANAMA

## CHAPTER I

SIXTY years ago the city of Panama was more difficult to reach than Tibet is to-day. The only means of communication, after the rule of Spain had ended, and the paved road across the Isthmus, from Porto Bello on the Atlantic, had become a ruin, was either by sea or, as far as boats could go, by the Rio Chagres, and thence on muleback.

The once proud city had fallen into a state of apathy. It had no foreign commerce, and very little domestic trade. A few members of some of the leading families of Spanish ancestry were sent abroad to be educated; but for the most part, poverty or indifference or both kept the inhabitants captive within their picturesque old walls. Dullness held them in a summer snare of contented ignorance. Men were sent up the crumbling towers of the old churches, with stones in their hands, to pound religiously upon the broken bells still suspended there, and

make a daily jangle in the name of God, while women in black lace mantillas went with their plentiful children to prayers. Life had slowed down to a snail's pace. There were no newspapers, no regular mails, no libraries, no public spirit or ambition in this old city so superbly situated at the joining of the continents, this natural gateway to and from the Pacific.

In such circumstances the need of modern means of communication across the Isthmus had been felt before the discovery of gold in California. With a business foresight akin to inspiration, certain enterprising New Yorkers, perceiving the great possibilities in an Isthmian rapid transit, began to take measures for establishing one. At first a tramway or horse-car road was thought of; but as early as 1848, W. H. Aspinwall, Henry Chauncey, and John L. Stephens had petitioned the government of New Granada, afterwards Colombia, for a concession under which they and their associates might open a railway, one terminus of which should be at the ancient city of Panama.

Nor had they asked in vain. Yet it was not until 1850 that John L. Stephens, already a well-known author, traveler, and citizen of the world, was sent to Bogota as the missionary of the doubtful enterprise, and brought back

## *Chapter I]*

a concession for building and operating the Panama Railroad, dated April 15th of that year, and signed by the Secretary of State of New Granada, Don Victoriano de Diego Paredes, and himself. It was considered a hazardous undertaking on the part of the contracting parties, but they were stout of heart and fully determined to carry the scheme through.

A considerable time was then unavoidably taken up with the preliminaries of organization, subscriptions to funds for the work, surveys, and especially the location of an Atlantic terminus.

At first it was thought that Porto Bello would be the best place. That beautiful and perfectly land-locked harbor, only twenty miles to the eastward of the present Colon, had been famous in old days as the one from which had sailed the treasure-laden galleons of Spain—the port through which, in a great golden stream, had poured the riches of the Pacific shores. It had been discovered and named by Columbus on the 2d of November, 1502. A paved road, made at enormous cost, had connected it with the city of Panama, fifty miles away, across the summits of the baby Andes. Proud Spain had fortified it with a cordon of batteries, the moldering remains of which may still be seen, from

one side of the narrow entrance all the way around to the other, like shark's teeth. There was, and is, deep water close alongside the rocky shores, so that large ships could come to land without the expense of wharves, while streams of fresh water, at all seasons of the year, flow down from the lovely encircling hills. It seemed the ideal place for the beginning of the projected railroad. The cost of construction could not greatly exceed that of any other route, while the comparative advantages were greatly in its favor. Into so snug a harbor the disastrous northers which at intervals vex the coast could never intrude, while the surrounding heights would afford salubrious and delightful homes. And more than all, here was a town long established and ready, with some repairs, for immediate use.

Then why, it will be asked, was this Beautiful Port, as its name indicates, not selected for the Atlantic terminus?

If tradition may be trusted, the late Mr. George Law, of New York, could have answered that question. He bought all the surrounding lands and held them for a rise. For many years an ancient warrior named Colonel Zwingle, who had been with Walker in Nicaragua, and his good wife, were employed by

## *Chapter I]*

Mr. Law as keepers and lived in great comfort on the estate. Upon my first visit to Porto Bello, soon after arrival on the Isthmus, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of this nineteenth-century Adam and Eve, in their lonely hillside cottage beneath the palms. I talked with them upon their vine-embowered veranda, overlooking the harbor, set like a gem in tropical luxuriance, the scene of Stedman's spirited poem, "Morgan the Buccaneer," as well as of many another historic deed of blood.

This old pair afterwards departed for California, leaving their small Eden to be soon lost in the lonely magnificence of the jungle.

The price of the land at Porto Bello had been more than the infant company thought it could afford to pay; and as no arrangement could be arrived at, an effort was then made to secure the location of the starting point at the foot of the hills which form the coast of Otro Lado (Other Side), as the shore of Navy Bay, opposite the present town of Colon, is called.

Among the warm local friends of the railroad enterprise who were strongly in favor of that site, was the late Mr. de Sabla, prominent at Panama in those days. He and others claimed that by making the terminus there, at or near what is now called Keeny's Bluff, and



[*Panama*

by taking the track thence, out around the head of the Bay to the Rio Mindi, results better in every way would be secured than by starting from the wretched mangrove swamps along the eastern margin thereof. There were the advantages of high land and fresh water on one side, against the malarial lair of land crabs and alligators on the other. So decided were the views of those gentlemen, that when at last they were overruled, and the Island of Manzanillo determined upon as the Atlantic terminus, they withdrew from all further connection with, or friendly interest in the enterprise. And in fact, at this distance, it seems strange indeed that the present site of Colon should have received the preference, unless it was solely on account of the greater depth of water along the coral reefs which guard the shores of the island.

It was decided by the engineers in charge that work should be commenced at or near the point where now stands the Panama Railroad lighthouse at Colon.

In regard to the beginning there is conflicting testimony. According to Dr. F. N. Otis, in his "Hand-book of the Panama Railroad," now out of print, Messrs. Trautwine and Baldwin struck the first blow.

He says: "No imposing ceremony inaugu-

## *Chapter I]*

rated breaking the ground. Two American citizens, leaping, ax in hand, from a native canoe upon a wild and desolate island, their retinue consisting of half a dozen Indians, who clear the path with rude knives, strike their glittering axes into the nearest tree: the rapid blows reverberate from shore to shore, and the stately cocoa crashes upon the beach." And he adds: "Thus unostentatiously was announced the commencement of a railway, which, from the interests and difficulties involved, might well be looked upon as one of the grandest and boldest enterprises ever attempted." This was in May, 1850.

On the other hand, I quote the following, from a highly interesting letter addressed to me by Captain John Jay Williams, C.E., dated at Jackson, Tennessee, February 25, 1897: "I also set the first stake, indicating the beginning of the railroad at Aspinwall, now Colon, in the winter of 1849, now forty-eight years ago, when the country around that place was a perfect wilderness. I was then thirty-one years old."

Captain Williams says, farther on: "A number of Colonel Hughes's Engineering Party, including myself, with some of the citizens, went from the mouth of the Chagres River, or rather from Fort San Lorenzo, in the little steamer

*Orus*, to Aspinwall, with Colonel Hughes in charge, for the express purpose of fixing the point for the commencement of the line of survey. After we had studied the ground over, I had a large stake driven, showing the beginning point of the railroad." Captain Williams, now dead, was doubtless the only surviving member of that remarkable company at the date of the above letter. He was a man of high character, and his statements are deserving of credit.

However it may have been in regard to the first blow, the historic fact remains that the work was actually begun in May, 1850, as stated, and from that date until its completion was pushed forward with all possible energy.

Colonel G. M. Totten, C.E., had been contractor for an unsuccessful enterprise known as *El Dique*, the object of which was to connect by canal the city of Cartagena with the Magdalena River at Calamar. He had therefore been for some time in the country, and knew something of its people and their language. He was selected as chief engineer of the projected railroad; while associated with him were Messrs. John C. Trautwine, James L. Baldwin, J. J. Williams, and others, as assistants. They were all in the prime of life, the eldest not more than forty or forty-five years, and

## *Chapter I]*

were men of ability and action. They collected a few native laborers and made the attack. There was not the least sign of human life, civilized or savage, on the island of Manzanillo; nor was there a space of dry land upon which to set foot, except the narrow ridge of coral sand that had been washed up by the surf along the reef. In front, the sea; behind, the malarial, immemorial swamp. But they set to work to clear away a space for the purpose of erecting a building to shelter themselves, their followers, and their supplies from sun and rain.

Colonel George W. Hughes was a distinguished engineer of the United States Army, who had been detailed, at the request of Messrs. Aspinwall and Stephens, to make a general survey of the proposed route; and J. J. Williams was his able assistant. The report of Colonel Hughes is still extant, in which is shown the vast prospective importance of the railroad across the Isthmus.

Captain Williams, in the letter already referred to, says: "I made the reconnaissance of the entire Panama Railroad, between the two oceans, and found the lowest pass in the mountain divide, through which the road now runs; and of which Colonel Hughes gave me full credit."

Thus there remains no doubt of the great importance of the services rendered by Captain Williams; which it does not appear that Dr. Otis, in his hand-book, recognized. But to return to the brave and hardy company of engineers and their assistants, camped on the ridge of sand. They had a schooner of 200 tons, upon which they had arrived, and on which they lived for the first few months. Even after the first house was completed it was found impossible to occupy it, on account of the swarms of mosquitoes, sand flies, and other noxious insects which invaded it; while on board the vessel the men were tormented with myriads of cockroaches, which rendered life a burden.

Among the engineers' assistants was Mr. Charles F. Lee, a young American whom I knew very well in later years, when he held the position of conductor on the road. He has long since passed away. From him I learned something of the trials that were undergone in those days. Sickness was seldom absent from the camp, while death was a too frequent visitor. No one escaped the *calentura*, as the jungle fever is called. In a little time the white members of the party wore the pale hue of ghosts; and even the dusky natives grew many shades lighter than their natural bronze.

## *Chapter I]*

Under these untoward circumstances, at the beginning of the long rainy season, of which no one of the company, except the natives, had any practical knowledge, was commenced the battle with tropical nature that was to end in triumph five weary years later.

## CHAPTER II

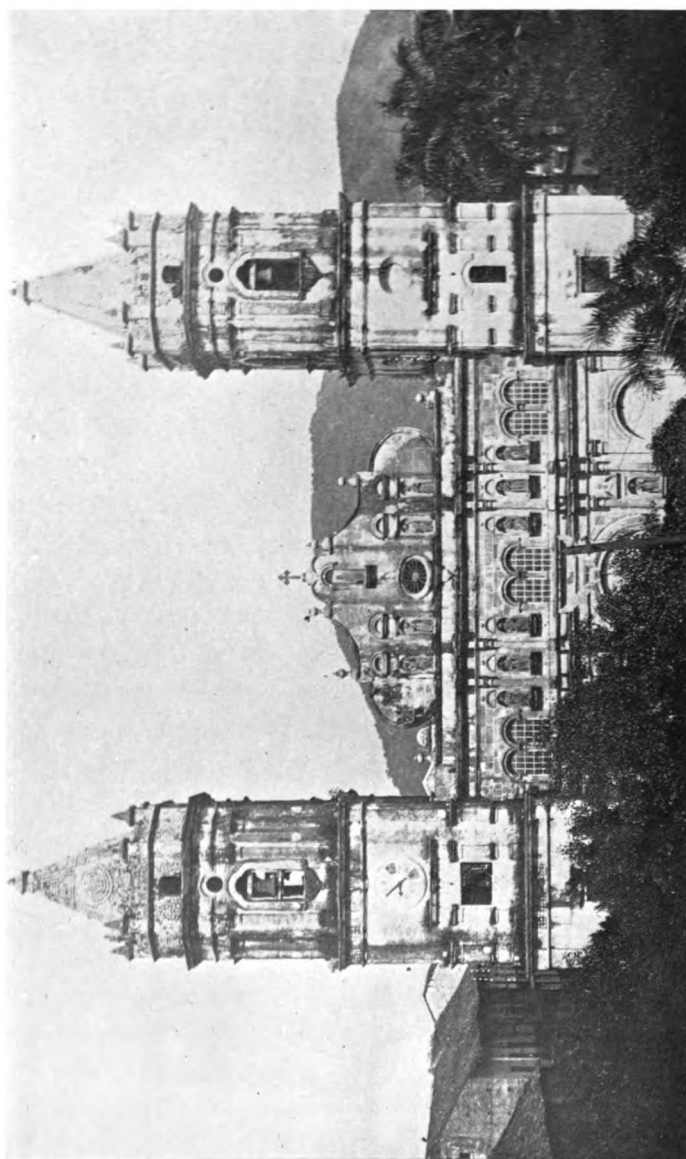
**P**RELIMINARY surveys had been made, and a summit level determined. But lines had to be run, and the entire track located. This arduous duty was assigned to Mr. Baldwin, the youngest of the staff. He organized a small party, and made the bold plunge. For a long distance they were obliged to wade in water waist deep, and to hew their way through the dense jungle.

After the first two miles the low hills were reached where the cemeteries are now situated. This was the first foothold on solid ground; but just beyond, another swamp was encountered, across which Baldwin led his men, waist deep, as before.

It is said that this intrepid man carried his noonday luncheon in his hat, during the progress of that part of the survey, and ate it standing, amid the envious alligators and water snakes. Be that as it may, it is doubtful if a more daring feat of engineering has been performed. Think of it! day after scorching day,







PANAMA CATHEDRAL, WITH ANCON HILL IN THE REAR.

## *Chapter II]*

shut in by impenetrable growth of jungle, each weary foot of which must be cut down before any advance could be made, breathing air laden with poison, and tormented by millions of insects! The wonder is that any man could have had such courage and endurance. But this was, as sometimes happens, the man for the occasion. On a later page an estimate of him will be attempted, when his sad end will be told.

The work was carried on with the utmost zeal, until the whole line had been located, and the grading for the track begun.

As early as 1849 crowds of gold seekers, bound for California, had begun to cross the Isthmus, by the Chagres as far as either Gorgona or Cruces, and thence by mule road to Panama. The need of the railroad became each day more pressing, and the company made every effort to push the work to completion. Contracts were made, embracing the whole line, and high hopes were entertained that in two years at most, from May, 1850, trains would be running from sea to sea. Two years, or possibly three, and steam cars would take the place of river bungoes and pack mules.

But the cost had not been accurately counted. Not money alone was needed. That could doubtless have been found, although it came

early to light that the estimates had been far too low. Total lack of experience had led the engineers to place the expenses at rates corresponding with those of similar work elsewhere. This proved to be a tremendous mistake. The cost of labor alone, and the difficulties in the way of obtaining it, soon swamped the contractors, everyone; and within two years the whole work came to a standstill.

But the directors, though disheartened, were not dismayed. The company could do no less than release the bankrupt contractors, and undertake the work on its own account. This was done. Colonel Totten was yet at the head of the engineers. Mr. Trautwine and Captain Williams soon withdrew, leaving Mr. Baldwin at the fore, next in command to Colonel Totten; in which position he showed phenomenal zeal, intelligence, and endurance.

Other names to be remembered among those who gave faithful service were Charles F. Lee, already mentioned; Perez Turner, C.E., John Wilson, Dr. Guyon, Tom Sharp, and William Thompson; all of whom lived to see the road completed, and to become respected officials of the same.

Push was the order, and it was obeyed to the utmost. Yet do what they might, strain

## *Chapter II]*

every nerve, exhaust every resource, the difficulties to be overcome proved almost insurmountable. The climate stood like a dragon in the way. To this day it seems astonishing that any soul survived to tell the tale. Labor was brought by the four winds: from the West Indies, Spanish Main, United States, Europe, and Asia. All was inefficient. The white men withered as cut plants in the sun. The Chinese fell victims, almost everyone, to a mania for suicide; while the colored contingent was, for the whole period, hard to secure in sufficient numbers to carry on the work with the rapidity so ardently desired. The dreaded Chagres fever cried delay. And yet it must be stated that the death rate was comparatively low. It has been a fearful exaggeration to say, for example, that each cross-tie of the railroad track represents a corpse. Let us see. That would be about 2,000 for each mile, or not far from 100,000 in all. As a matter of fact, now stated upon the highest authority, the whole number employed, from first to last, did not exceed 6,000, of whom not more than forty per cent died in the service. It is true that the hospitals were always filled, and that sulphate of quinine became a prime necessity—almost an article of diet; but chills and fever rarely kill, and the so-called Chagres fever

is nothing more. It is a malarial fever, disagreeable and often difficult to control, but by no means deadly. The chill is not of a pronounced type, being rather a dumb ague than an old-fashioned "shake." I speak from experience; for I suppose I must have had at least a hundred attacks of it. It leaves the system much prostrated, requiring careful nursing and a change of climate, if possible, but no one need have a mortal dread of it. Quinine and care are the remedies.

As soon as a few miles of track had been graded, an engine and construction cars were brought out, and track-laying was begun.

Gatun, the first station, seven miles from Aspinwall, was reached on the first of October, 1851, and it was not long before passengers began to use the road in a small way. The New York steamers still came to Chagres, at the mouth of the river, to deliver and to receive passengers; but in November—the month of northers—of that same year the steamers *Georgia* and *Philadelphia* were caught in a cyclone off Chagres, and were compelled to put into Navy Bay for refuge. This event gave the railroad its first business of any importance. We are told that there was not, at the time, a passenger car of any description on the road;

## *Chapter II]*

but that arrangements were made by which the large number of passengers brought by these steamers were safely transported as far as Gatun (seven miles), whence they proceeded in boats up the river, on their way across the Isthmus, "well pleased."

This was the fortuitous beginning of the great travel that soon followed, the receipts from which, during the remainder of the time before the road was completed, amounted to about \$2,000,000. All this went at once into construction and was of course a great financial help. News of the transfer of passengers was carried far and wide, and the doubtful fortunes of the railroad were greatly improved thereby. The wavering courage of the directory was restored and from that time, although great trials were in store, success was never doubted.

Before the track had been finished to Gatun, several vessels carried their cargoes across the bar, at the mouth of the Chagres, and proceeding up the river, landed them at that station. These cargoes consisted of materials for construction and greatly facilitated the progress of the work beyond Gatun; so that in a few months Barbacoas was reached, which is halfway across the Isthmus. At this point it became necessary to take the track across the Chagres River. A

wooden bridge 300 feet long was planned, but when it was nearly completed one span was swept away by a great flood.

At this time, on October 10, 1852, the lamented death of the president of the company, John Lloyd Stephens, at the age of forty-seven, occurred in New York, whither he had gone, worn out with anxiety and laid low by the climate. His loss was keenly felt. He was a man of more than ordinary ability, as his work on *Central America*, published by Harper & Brothers in 1841, and richly illustrated by Cath-erwood, testifies.

Mr. W. C. Young succeeded Mr. Stephens as president of the company.

At the time of Mr. Stephens's death things looked dark. A new contract had been made with Mr. M. C. Story for the completion of the road from the bridge across the Chagres, at Barbacoas, to Panama; but after a year the bridge was still unfinished, and at last the whole work faltered and stood still. The company was again compelled to assume entire charge, and to take such steps as were necessary to finish the track. In the place of Mr. Stephens's successor, Mr. David Hoadley became president—"a gentleman who deservedly enjoyed the respect and confidence, not alone of the company,

## *Chapter II]*

but also of the entire community." He was a man of wealth, and under his presidency affairs began to look more promising. Colonel A. J. Center was vice-president, and a little later became resident superintendent on the Isthmus in order to forward, by his presence, tact, and uncommon energy, the interests of the enterprise.

The most strenuous efforts were now made, and on January 27, 1855, "at midnight and in rain," the last rail was laid at the Summit, now Culebra, thirty-seven miles from Aspinwall, and ten miles from Panama. The Panama end of the road was built under the care of Mr. J. Young, who is said to have been a capable man; the materials for construction having been sent from New York to Panama by sea.

During all these years great credit is due to Colonel G. M. Totten and the officers and men under his direction, and especially to Mr. James L. Baldwin, for the unfailing courage displayed. To quote from a writer of the period—at a crisis near the end of the year 1850—"the bravest might well have faltered, and even turned back from so dark a prospect as presented itself to the leaders of this forlorn hope; but they were men whom personal perils and privations could not daunt, whose energy and determination, toil and suffering could not van-



[*Panama*

quish." They saw with prophetic vision, even through the delirium of fever, and the clouds of doubt and darkness by which they were enveloped, that they were engaged in an undertaking of great importance to the commerce of the world, and that upon their devotion its early completion depended. All honor should therefore be paid to the memory of these heroic men. They have now joined the majority, everyone,

—"All, all are gone, the old familiar faces,"—

but their names should be remembered with those who have conferred benefits on our race.



**NATIVE DWELLING, CANAL ZONE, PANAMA.**



## CHAPTER III

**T**HE railroad was finished. It had cost \$7,000,000. Would it pay?

To one who had never seen a tropical jungle it might seem strange that a little road, less than fifty miles in length, should have cost very nearly \$140,000 per mile; more especially when there had been no heavy grading, no tunneling, no rock cutting of any importance; and a summit level of only 262 feet above the sea. Without the least suspicion of extravagance or dishonesty, how could the total expense have been so enormous?

But the real wonder was that the road had been built at all. To this distant day, one cannot pass from ocean to ocean, and see from the car windows the dense masses of tangled verdure on either side, forming in many places green walls apparently impenetrable, without a sense of the marvelous. How could lines ever have been run? And afterwards, how could men have been found to penetrate and conquer this torrid wilderness?

As already stated, Colonel A. J. Center was appointed to the position of superintendent, while Colonel Totten retained that of chief engineer. It has always been said that Colonel Totten, recognizing the great services of Mr. J. L. Baldwin, in the location and construction of the road—from the time when, in company with Mr. John L. Stephens, before the Concession of 1850 had been obtained from the Bogota Government, he had gone over the route, and decided that it was practicable for a railroad, to the hour when the first engine bellowed its triumphant way from ocean to ocean—had generously certified his willingness that Mr. Baldwin should be made chief engineer, but that the offer had been as generously refused. At all events, Mr. Baldwin retired from the Isthmus, and spent several years in the West, after which he returned to perform his part in the tragedy to be recounted later.

Mr. Perez Turner was made assistant engineer; Mr. William Nelson given the important post of commercial agent at Panama; John Marcial appointed to the equally responsible position of fiscal and shipping agent at Aspinwall; John Wilson made commissary; John F. Bateman, master mechanic; and Messrs. Lee and Thomson, conductors.

### *Chapter III]*

With this staff of good men and true the working organization was completed, and the world was informed that time had been annihilated on the Panama Isthmus, or had at least been cut down to about three hours for passenger trains, and four or five hours for freight. There was to be no more dreadful bungo-mule combination, picturesque though it had been; but all mankind might cross from sea to sea in the cars.

Just how the anticipated volume of business was all at once to be accommodated was not so clear. Here was the railroad, but so great had been the financial stress that no provision of motive power and rolling stock had been made. The road was, for the moment, as poor as poverty. Its principal asset was hope. No doubt arose in the mind of Superintendent Center, who was at all times an optimist, or of Colonel Totten, whose strong point was obstinacy, that soon all would be well. Money would roll in literally on wheels. If the present could be bridged over, the future would take care of itself. To help in bridging it, and to gain firm foothold upon that golden future, cautious and sagacious Colonel Center, requested to send to the president and directors in New York his ideas of a tariff of charges suitable to the situation, advised the following:

## FOR PASSENGERS

First Class.....	\$25.00 gold
Steerage.....	10.00 gold

## FOR FREIGHT

Personal Baggage.....	\$0.05 per pound
Express.....	1.80 per cubic foot
Ordinary First Class.....	.50 per cubic foot
Second Class.....	1.50 per 100 pounds
Mails.....	.22 per pound
Coal.....	5.00 per ton

“These rates,” said Colonel Center to me, long afterwards, “were intended to be, to a certain extent, prohibitory, until we could get things in shape. As soon as we were on our feet and ready for business we could, as I wrote the president, gracefully reduce our charges to within reasonable limits. For it is always pleasing to the public to have prices come down rather than rise.”

To his surprise, these provisional rates were adopted; and what is more, they remained in force for more than twenty years. It was found just as easy to get large rates as small; and thus, without looking very much to the future, this goose soon began to lay golden eggs with astonishing extravagance. The road was put in good order, with track foremen established in neat cottages four or five miles apart, along the whole

### *Chapter III]*

line. New engines and cars were put on, commodious terminal wharves and other buildings provided, and all things were in excellent shape. Dividends on the original 50,000 shares began to be paid, and soon mounted to twenty-four per cent per annum, with a large surplus carried to the sinking fund. Nor was it long before the price of the shares went up in Wall Street to more than one hundred per cent above par; and although a stock dividend of forty per cent was declared, to cover the amount of earnings which had gone toward construction, thus increasing the capital from \$5,000,000 to \$7,000,000, the shares were sold the next day at the same high price at which they had been sold the day before. They were regarded as almost the best investment in Wall Street at that period. In fact, for the first ten years the enterprise was on the high tide of prosperity, and it did not seem possible that its fortunes could ever become a prey to rivalry. The management was conservative, too much so perhaps, and strictly honest. Under the presidency of Mr. David Hoadley, whose name was the synonym of honor, assisted by the able and indefatigable secretary of the company, Mr. Joseph F. Joy, the corporation soon became known and respected in the business world as one of unquestionable stabil-



ity and worth. Everyone connected with it, from president to office boy, took a peculiar pride in such connection, as though honor had been conferred thereby. If to be a Roman was greater than to be a king, so to be in any way associated with the Panama Railroad Company's service was to be highly favored by fortune.

On the Isthmus there was an *esprit du corps*, a feeling of pride that manifested itself in a hundred ways, of which newcomers were speedily made aware. And it must be recorded, that while there was not the least extravagance in the conduct of affairs, but, on the contrary, great simplicity, the officers, clerks, and employees generally were paid generously for their services, and the lives of themselves and families made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

The Isthmus of those days was but slowly emerging from long years of almost absolute isolation and consequent industrial decay. Except the narrow lane through which the track had been laid, hewn out of the jungle and hemmed in by dense vegetation, it was practically an unknown land. Its resources, so far as the people of the railroad were concerned, were nil.

It was necessary, therefore, that the company should be, in a manner, patriarchal in its relations to those whom it employed. The food they

### *Chapter III]*

ate and the houses in which they lived were part of the contract. During the first years it was a large family, the head of which was the superintendent or the chief engineer, either taking charge in the absence of the other. Headquarters were at the Washington House, fronting the Caribbean, whose foam-crested waves beat forever on the coral reef looking northward, a few yards away. There the officers gathered for their meals, with the chief at the head, in true family style. All the supplies, with few exceptions—a chicken, a pig, a few yams or yucas, a bunch of bananas—were brought from New York; the native farmer not yet suspecting that he had fortune within his indolent grasp, did he but know or care.

Even in case of illness, medical attendance and the hospitals were free; for the company kept competent surgeons on its pay rolls, whose duty it was to dose and to carve its servants in case of need.

A library of good books, and a reading room, with billiards attached, were also provided for the employees; nor were the spiritual needs of the railroad flock forgotten, as the fine church, built in 1865 mainly at the expense of the company, upon the margin of the sounding sea, still attests.

[*Panama*

In short, nothing in reason was omitted by the company that could make the chains of exile easier to wear by those who had left their northern homes to join the Isthmian service. Railroad life, at best, is not altogether rose-colored; but here was found a Colony of the Rail, so to speak, whose members, with few exceptions, were satisfied with their lot.

And thus Gray-Beard Time marshaled his great army of the hours, days, weeks, months, and years in quick procession, while prosperity reigned.



GROUP OF MOTHER AND CHILDREN IN NATIVE DRESS, PANAMA.



## CHAPTER IV

HAVING been appointed, during this happy period, to a position in the service of the Panama Railroad Company on the Isthmus, I arrived at Colon (then Aspinwall), by the steamship *Northern Light*, Captain Tinklepaugh, nine days from New York. It was the early morning of December 20, 1861, almost seven years after the road had been opened. Ice in North River had delayed the departure of the steamer, crowded with passengers for California and other parts of the Pacific coast. There was no sun in the steely sky, and the short day was nearly done when the Narrows were passed, and the steamer headed for the gray and gusty sea. The storm-tossed vessel went plunging onward into the inky darkness, and all on board were wretched in the extreme. But in a few days the Gulf Stream had been crossed, dreaded Cape Hatteras, and Watling's Island, where Columbus first landed, left behind; the tropic of Cancer cut in two; Bird Rock, Castle Island, Cape Maysi at the eastern end of Cuba, and Navassa

Island passed, and the indigo Caribbean entered. Bitter winter weather had been suddenly exchanged for tropical heat and the golden sunlight of the Belt of Palms.

At that time Commodore Vanderbilt owned the steamers on the Atlantic side, while the Pacific Mail Company had the service between Panama and San Francisco, and the Panama Railroad had put on a line to Central American ports. The south coast, as far as Valparaiso, was supplied by the boats of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, of which Mr. George Petrie—"Lord George,"—a man of remarkable ability, was the general manager, with offices at Callao.

These were all the steam connections on the Pacific coast at that time; although a line—of which more hereafter—was established, a little later, between Panama and Australia, via the Sandwich Islands and New Zealand.

On the Atlantic side there were only the New York line, the Royal Mail Southampton line, and the first of Holt's Liverpool monthly boats, which afterwards developed into the strong West India and Pacific Steamship Company, now Leylands.

These connections, and a line of sailing vessels from New York, gave the road a traffic apparently satisfactory to those concerned.

## Chapter IV]

Among my fellow-passengers on the *Northern Light* was an American sea captain named Dewey, about eighty years of age, a resident of Lambayeque; to whom, or to whose breezy old ghost I wish to pay my respects, as a man of great good nature, with an immense fund of salt-sea lore, which it appeared to give him a sort of spendthrift pleasure to impart. A character that would have delighted Robert Louis Stevenson or Clark Russell, he contributed to make my first sea voyage memorable; and I trust he is now with "the jolly, jolly mariners" of "The Last Chantey."

Tinklepaugh, the captain of the steamer, was a large, gross, rough, florid, ignorant Dane, a favorite of Commodore Vanderbilt, of whom he told this characteristic story. One cold winter night a Sound steamer belonging to the Commodore lost her way in a storm, and went ashore on Long Island. Tinklepaugh was the first mate of the boat, and was given the chief credit of getting her off and saving her. A few days later he met the Commodore, who praised him, in rough fashion, for the service he had rendered. But he thought he deserved a more substantial reward for a night of exposure and of great peril; especially as his wages were only forty dollars a month; and ventured to say so.



[*Panama*

"Young man," roared Vanderbilt, "what in thunder do you want anyhow?"

"Well, sir, this being zero weather, perhaps a nice warm suit of clothes might strike you favorably, in recognition of my having saved your ship."

"Do you not receive your wages regularly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then, that is all you will get and be d—d to you. I like you well enough, but let me tell you, young feller, I have found that *the only way to have good men is to keep them poor.*"

Lists of the Panama Railroad Company's officers, both in New York and on the Isthmus, as they were when I came to Aspinwall, will be found in the appendix.

The New York offices were in the old Tontine Building at 88 Wall Street, whence they were long afterwards removed to the Mills Building, then to 29 Broadway, and later to 24 State Street.

On the Isthmus the railroad people were a kind of happy family, with Colonel Totten at their head. That gentleman, although no longer young, was still vigorous. As I remember him, he was a small dark man, and wore spectacles. His manner was quiet and reserved, although he

## *Chapter IV]*

had plenty of humor. He gained much credit for having engineered the road successfully through all difficulties, while it was under construction, and he was regarded with great favor by the president and directors. It must be said of him that he possessed certain qualities of the first order, chief of which was his staying power. His opinion once formed, there was no more to be said on the subject. Indeed, he was conservative to the last degree. While he was modest and unobtrusive, it would nevertheless have been difficult to move him from a position once assumed. As a military man he would have been an obstinate fighter. As a civilian he was reticent, plain, steadfast, just, and the soul of honor and honesty. He was a superior man without being great, looked up to and respected by all; but hardly a man of practical affairs beyond his chosen profession of civil engineer, and it is doubtful if his retention by the company, as its virtual head, long after a wide-awake traffic manager was needed in that position, was wise. For many years whatever he said "went." If he withheld his approval the affair, whatever it might be, was no longer discussed. But he was not a business man, as his later misfortunes demonstrated. The very virtues which recommended him as chief engineer

of the Panama Railroad during its construction, particularly a tenacity of purpose amounting to obstinacy, were unfavorable to continued success.

Colonel A. J. Center had retired from the service to accept the general management of Wells, Fargo & Company's business in New York, and Mr. William Parker, an engineer and railroad man formerly connected with the Fitchburg road, and later with the Baltimore and Ohio, had been appointed, early in 1861, to succeed him as superintendent. Mr. Parker was well along in years, but retained a large share of activity for the discharge of his duties. He was originally from Perth Amboy, N. J., a kindly man, paternal in his instincts, and greatly respected by the employees. He was killed by Mr. Baldwin in 1868, as will be related.

Mr. Charles F. Stedman, who succeeded Mr. John Marcial as fiscal and shipping agent, was the only brother of the distinguished poet and critic, Edmund Clarence Stedman, now at the head of American letters. He was a young gentleman of great charm of manner and ability as a man of affairs. It gives me great pleasure to recall him. His health failed and his lamented death followed soon after my arrival, when I had

## *Chapter IV]*

the honor to be appointed to the position thus so sorrowfully made vacant.

Mr. William Nelson was perhaps the strongest horse in the team. He was of Scotch birth, and had been at Panama, as United States Consul, long before the days of the road. His personality was of that fascinating quality which draws and retains warm friends; at the same time, his business sagacity was unquestioned. He was a fine man physically, with a corresponding intellectual endowment; while a strong sense of humor was perhaps his most salient characteristic. He had control of the general interests of the company at Panama, including the agency of the Central American steamers. In 1872, or early in 1873, he left the service and retired to Guatemala, where he had made profitable investments in coffee estates. He died there, February 12, 1878, at the age of sixty-two.

Mr. E. D. Dennis was one of the most elegant young men to be found anywhere. He was in the railroad service for several years, and held also the agency of Wells, Fargo & Company, at Aspinwall, as well as the coal agency for the United States navy; from which sources he was said to have made a small fortune. Leaving the service, in company with Mr. Fred Ansoategue, he joined the firm of Marcial & Com-

pany, New York, as partner, and continued to prosper. Both he and his wife, a daughter of the late Admiral Cooper, U. S. N., and a very beautiful and accomplished woman, are now dead.

Mr. Perez Turner was also much respected. He married a charming Panama woman who survives him. He died at Colon, in September, 1873.

Dr. D. H. Guyon was a gentleman and a scholar. He had a large library, and was held in high esteem as a man of culture. He went from Panama to Chile, where he resided many years, afterwards returning to Missouri, whence he came. His associate in the pay department, Mr. J. P. Woodbury, came from Rutland, Vt., but after a few years returned home with his amiable wife, much to the regret of their Isthmian friends.

Dr. W. T. White had a passion for surgery, and made it a practice to dissect his hospital patients as soon as they were cold. He had a theory that every person who had been in the Isthmian climate ten years—in many instances less—must have a liver hopelessly diseased. Hence the cutting up. He stated that the theory had been abundantly proven by his investigations. He went to New York, where he es-

## *Chapter IV]*

tablished a practice, and has only recently joined the majority.

Dr. J. P. Kluge was a different kind of man. While he had the name of being a good physician, he made himself agreeable socially, and was much liked. After Dr. White left the Isthmus, he came to Aspinwall, as chief surgeon of the company, and had charge of Colonel Totten "that time he died and came to life again," according to the current phrase. The Colonel, although so long acclimated, was very ill with the fatal type of yellow fever known as the vomito. Dr. Kluge and his associate, Dr. Springer, held a final consultation, with the following result:

Dr. Kluge announced that there was no chance of recovery—not the slightest.

Dr. Springer, more cautious, and believing that while there was life there was hope, said there might be one chance in a thousand.

Then a sorrowful contention arose as to the mathematical probabilities of an equation wherein the unknown quantity appeared so very, very doubtful. But to be prepared for the apparently inevitable, Superintendent Parker had a coffin ready, and a funeral train in waiting. It was, indeed, a tearful group, of which I was one, that stood around the dying man, with the con-

fidant expectation that each breath would be the last. But the remark of Montaigne was then, in a manner, illustrated, that "some have survived their executioners." For Colonel Totten did not die upon that day, nor until many years later, on May 17, 1884, at the age of seventy-five.

But poor Dr. Kluge, at that time the picture of health, fell a victim, not long after, to fever and overwork. He did not put foot on ship, as he ought, and sail straight away to the North. He thought he could cure himself, but before he at last decided to leave he had become so reduced that he died on the passage home.

Of others I need not speak. It would have been difficult, I think, to find an equal number of men who would have shown a like zeal and fidelity, or lived together in greater harmony and mutual regard.

The road itself, as I first knew it, might have been compared to a great spider, ready to catch the flies of commerce that might buzz its way. But it was soon evident to me that it was not an ambitious spider. The word enterprise was unknown to it. If passengers and cargo came, they were welcome, and the jingle of their coin made pleasant music; but no effort was made to enlarge and permanently establish the ingather-

## Chapter IV]

ing capacities of the web. It was a lazy spider, and would almost disdain to say, "Will you walk into my parlor?"

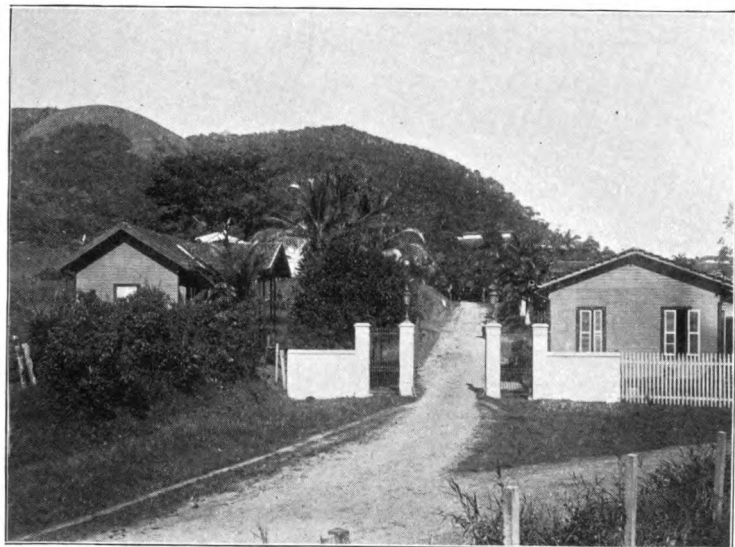
As an illustration, I will mention here that about that time the Pacific Mail Company wanted to ship 20,000 tons of coal to Panama, for the supply of their steamers on the Pacific. The freight over the road, of \$5 per ton in gold, without the expense of loading or unloading, was not complained of by the shippers; but there was a lack of coal cars, and unless the railroad company would supply the deficiency, so that ships would not get on demurrage in discharging, it would be better to send the coal around the Horn.

This was represented to the railroad management, and the reply came back, that *cargo of that kind was not desired*. The whole lot was therefore shipped to Panama by sea, and our spider missed a fat hundred thousand dollar fly that it might have had as well as not. I mention this incident to show the sort of come-or-stay-away-as-you-please spirit that prevailed. That it was a short-sighted policy became painfully evident later on. Colonel Totten had gained laurels as an engineer, his star was in the ascendant, and it led a trustful company a good deal astray.



[*Panama*

Had the spirit of modern enterprise, so brilliantly manifested in the building of the road, found in its earlier control a representative who could have risen to the height of the great commercial occasion, there is no room for doubt that a very different destiny would have waited upon the Panama Isthmian transit.



**ENTRANCE TO ANCON HOSPITAL, CANAL ZONE.**



## CHAPTER V

**D**URING the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, while the road was yet unfinished, the gross earnings were more than a million dollars; and the total income for the first ten years, including 1861, was \$11,339,662.78. A considerable portion of this sum was used in construction and equipment even after the trains began to run. The original capital of the company, as before stated, was \$5,000,000, in shares of \$100 each; and it was decided by the directors to issue a stock dividend of forty per cent, to cover the earnings that had been thus used. This raised the number of the shares to 70,000, where it still remains.

This was the period of greatest prosperity. Dividends of six per cent quarterly were paid, after all expenses had been met, and the affairs of the company were the color of the rose. The shares were sold in Wall Street at a premium of more than one hundred and fifty per cent, even after the stock dividend had added \$2,000,000 to their amount. It did not seem possible that any

combination of circumstances would interfere with this truly phenomenal prosperity. It was confidently expected by those who were interested that the natural increase of traffic would give a corresponding yearly increase of income and dividends. And so it might have done, had there not been two or three very serious drawbacks. Perhaps the most serious was the fatal fact that the contract made by John L. Stephens with the Government of New Granada, now Colombia, was for only a very short period, considering the importance of the enterprise. It is not easy to tell at this late day why the time for which the concession was made was so limited. Perhaps Mr. Stephens could not make better conditions; or perhaps forty-nine years—for that was the term of the contract—may have seemed long enough to him. It was agreed that at the end of the first twenty years from the date of opening the road, the Government of New Granada could take possession of the same by paying the sum of \$5,000,000. Here, then, was a rich plum, that was yielding a clear revenue of twenty-four per cent on \$7,000,000, with only twenty short years in which to “decline and fall off.” Or if the Bogota Government should pass that date—which was by no means likely—at the end of thirty years the sum would be reduced

## *Chapter V]*

to \$4,000,000; at the end of forty years to \$2,000,000; and when the forty-nine years came round, the road, with all its appurtenances and belongings, was to be turned over to Colombia without further payment.

These facts may be found in the contract signed at Bogota by Victoriano de D. Paredes and John Lloyd Stephens, and approved by President Lopez, April 16, 1850.

With such a Damocles's sword suspended over the fortunes of "the best paying railroad in the world" what was to be done? No amount of regret that the affair had not been better arranged for the interests of the company would now avail. The good people of Colombia were keenly alive to the fact that they had, in vulgar phrase, a big thing within their grasp. Therefore, as early as 1867, or eight years before the expiration of the first term of twenty years, the directors of the railroad company sent Colonel Totten and Mr. William Nelson to Bogota, duly commissioned to enter into a new contract that should supplement or entirely supersede the old one, on the best terms that could be secured. Reports had reached the company's headquarters in New York, to the effect that other influences were at work to obtain possession of the road at the expiration of the twenty-year term, in

1875; and that there was no doubt about the payment of the \$5,000,000 that would then be due to the railroad company, in case Colombia should elect to pay it.

These reports, which doubtless had some foundation in truth, stimulated the Parent Company, as the railroad had now been named, to urge upon its representatives before the Colombian (or rather New Granadian) Government, the absolute necessity of prompt action, at whatever cost. In this delicate situation, it became necessary for the ambassadors to overcome, as far as possible, the idea entertained by the rulers and people of the country that the road was a golden providence of infinite benefaction, sent to them as an inheritance and reward of merit, forever and ever.

The labors of these gentlemen lasted several months; and when at last the new contract was signed, July 5, 1867, by Messrs. J. G. Lara, on the part of Colombia, and G. M. Totten, for the Panama Railroad, and finally approved, with some important modifications, August 16, 1867, by President Santos Acosta, the ambassadors had captured a sort of white elephant. But it was probably the best that could have been done under the trying circumstances.

The conditions of the new contract were hard

## *Chapter V]*

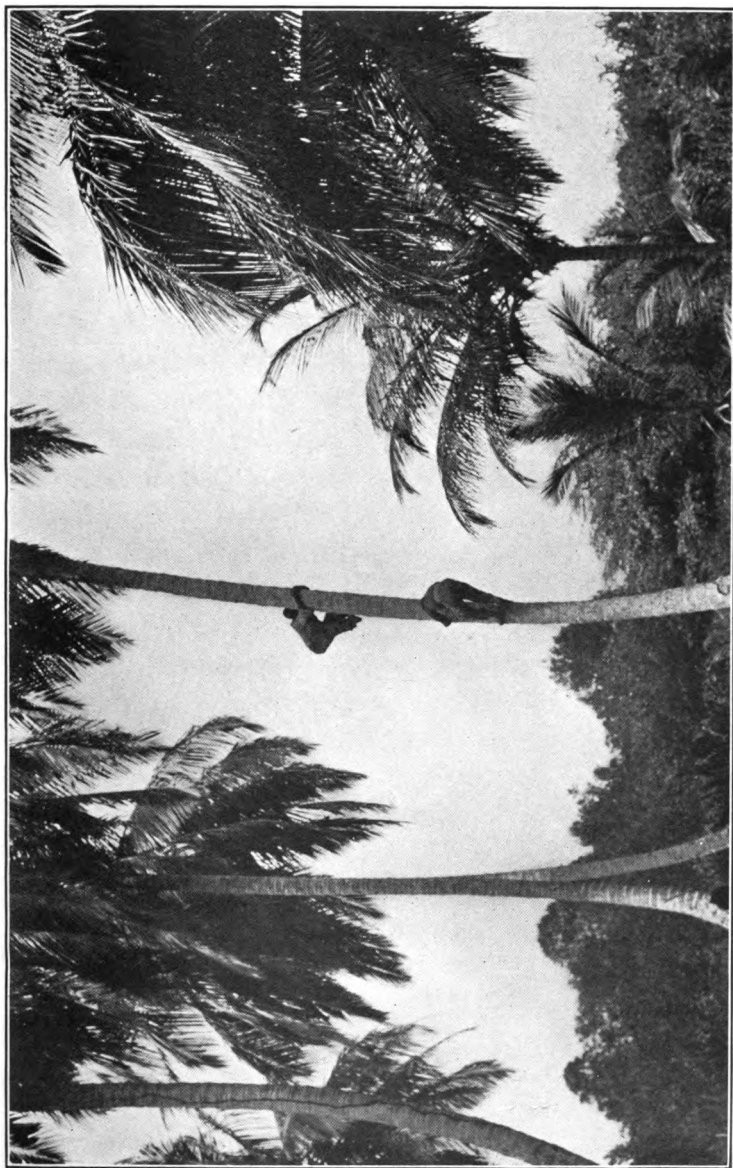
on the Parent Company, and it is doubtful if it would have consented to them if the directorate in New York could have been consulted before the document had been signed. But at that date there was no cable, and Bogota was farther away from New York than Japan. It was therefore Hobson's choice; take it or leave it. Many thought at the time that to leave it would have been wiser; for the burdens assumed by the road were onerous in the extreme. It is true that the duration of the new franchise had been extended to ninety-nine years from the day it was executed; but no other better condition than the old contract embraced had been conceded. On the contrary, many new obligations had been imposed. First of all, to lubricate the ways for the launch of this new scheme, a cool million in gold was paid at once; and thenceforward, to the end of the ninety-nine years, the further subsidy of \$250,000 in gold per annum was to be promptly handed over to the Government of Colombia, as New Granada had in the meantime been rechristened. It was further stipulated, in Article IV, that "the company binds itself to extend the railroad on the Pacific side to the islands of Naos, Culebra, Perico, and Flamenco; or other place in the Bay of Panama where there may exist a permanent depth of water for large ships."



This would involve the expenditure of many millions.

Another condition imposed was the recession of the Island of Manzanillo, upon which Colon is built. Under the old contract it had been granted to the railroad in perpetuity. Under the new, it was to be restored at the end of ninety-nine years, along with the road.

These and minor conditions of a less favorable nature than those contained in the original grant having been consented to, it was little wonder that when the intelligence reached New York, and it became known that the future of the company had been handicapped with so weighty liabilities, in exchange for so little present or prospective gain, panic seized upon the holders of the shares. The latter fell in Wall Street when the news arrived from the rosy region of three hundred to the gloomy depths of eighty in a single week. It was a case of *facilis descensus Avernii*, and the rest of it; which freely translated may read: the descent of a railroad to Hades is easy enough, but to get it back is another thing.



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NEGRO BOYS CLIMBING COCOANUT TREE, COLON, 1906.



## CHAPTER VI

**O**THER clouds began to gather. In July, 1862, the United States Congress passed an act in favor of a railroad and telegraph line across the continent. A corporate body known as the Union Pacific Railroad Company was organized and authorized to build the road from a point in Nebraska, then a territory, to the western boundary of Nevada, there to connect with the Central Pacific Railroad, which ran from Sacramento eastward.

This great line, 1,776 miles long, from the Missouri River to the Bay of Sacramento, was to be completed not later than July 1, 1876, or within fourteen years.

Immense inducements had been offered by the United States Government, in the shape of lands and direct financial aid. Yet with all these powerful advantages, nothing was done at the eastern end until 1864, during which year twelve miles were constructed from Omaha westward. In 1865 so little energy was displayed that twenty-eight additional miles only were laid. At

this rate it would have taken more than a half century to complete the work. I remember well the remark made at that time by Colonel Totten, when discussing the possible danger of competition with that road.

"It will be at least twenty-five years," said he, "before through trains are run from Omaha to San Francisco." He laughed to scorn the idea that the fortunes of the Panama Railroad were or could be, for a long time to come, in any manner influenced unfavorably by the overland route. But just then, to quote from the history of that stupendous enterprise, as given in *Harper's Magazine*:

"The work fell into the hands of men who were resolved to *push things*, no matter at what cost. Soon a mile a day was reached. Then, in 1868, the work was pushed forward with a rapidity heretofore unknown. For weeks, four miles a day was the usual rate at which the rails were laid; and early in May, 1869, the thousand miles and more from Omaha to the head of Salt Lake had been built. Meanwhile the Central Pacific had been pushing on their road to meet their eastern coadjutors." On May 10, 1869, the world was astonished by the intelligence that the last rail of the "Overland" had been laid, at Promontory Point. "The ceremony of placing

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the last tie of the united roads was performed with as much display as possible. The scene was a grassy valley at the head of Great Salt Lake. About 3,000 people of all sorts had congregated. Among them were many men who had borne a prominent part in the construction of the road. The final tie was of polished laurel-wood bound at the ends with silver bands. A golden spike sent by California, a silver one by Nevada, and one of gold and silver and iron by Arizona were used. These spikes were driven home by the representative officers of the companies by whom the two roads had been constructed. Prayers were offered and speeches made. Arrangements were made by which the strokes of the hammers were connected with the telegraph wires; and almost on the instant it was known on the Pacific and Atlantic that the junction of the roads had been completed."

And here is what Mr. Bret Harte wrote in celebration of the event:

### WHAT THE ENGINES SAID

What was it the engines said,  
Pilots touching, head to head,  
Facing in the single track,  
Half a world behind each back?  
This is what the engines said,  
Unreported and unread.

With a prefatory screech,  
In a florid Western speech,  
Said the engine from the West:  
"I am from Sierra's crest;  
And if altitude's a test,  
Why, I reckon it's confessed  
That I've done my level best."

Said the engine from the East:  
"They who work best talk the least.  
S'pose you whistle down your brakes;  
What you've done is no great shakes—  
Pretty fair—but let our meeting  
Be a different kind of greeting.  
Let these folks with champagne stuffing,  
Not their engines, do the puffing.

"Listen! Where Atlantic beats  
Shores of snow and summer heats;  
Where the Indian autumn skies  
Paint the woods with wampum dyes,  
I have chased the flying sun,  
Seeing all he looked upon,  
Blessing all that he has blessed,  
Nursing in my iron breast  
All his vivifying heat,  
All his clouds about my crest;  
And before my flying feet  
Every shadow must retreat."

Said the Western engine, "Whew!"  
And a long low whistle blew.  
"Come now, really that's the oddest  
Talk for one so very modest.

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You brag of your East! You *do*!  
Why, I bring the East to you!  
All the Orient, all Cathay,  
Find through me the shortest way;  
And the sun you follow here  
Rises in my hemisphere.  
Really—if one must be rude—  
Length, my friend, ain't longitude."

Said the Union, "Don't reflect, or  
I'll run over some Director."  
Said the Central, "I'm Pacific;  
But, when riled, I'm quite terrific.  
Yet to-day we shall not quarrel,  
Just to show these folks a moral,  
How two engines—in their vision—  
Once have met without collision."

That is what the engines said,  
Unreported and unread;  
Spoken slightly through the nose,  
With a whistle at the close.

Thus an undertaking—unprecedented in the history of the world—that was to have occupied at least twenty-five years, had been completed in seven. The crowds of California passengers, the mails, and the millions of treasure, as well as the higher class of merchandise, ceased to come and go via Panama. The best of the California business of the Panama route was over, and the Parent Company never again pretended to skim the cream of *that* great traffic.



But this was not the only nor yet the greater loss. The entire population of California at the time was not more than half a million. It was, for the most part, it is true, a population of live men, full of energy; and the rapidity of development was marvelous. But with all its enterprise and self-confidence, if its entire commerce with the Eastern States and Europe had sought the Isthmian route, it would have been limited compared with that of the Spanish-American west coast. The portion that actually came from California to Panama was but a fraction of the total amount from all sources. Dr. Otis, in his "Handbook," says:

"The fact seems to be overlooked that while California has a population estimated at only 500,000, the population of Central America is over 2,000,000, and that that portion of South America, whose only means of communication with the Atlantic is either by the Isthmus of Panama or around Cape Horn, contains nearly 8,000,000, and that regular and direct steam communication exists between those countries and the Panama Railroad."

It would be needless to say another word as to the paramount importance of the traffic of 10,000,000, compared with that of one twentieth of that number. Even so long ago as 1867,

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Dr. Otis goes on to state that "careful estimates show that the value of the trade of these countries to and from the Atlantic exceeds \$60,000,000 per annum. The managers of the Panama Railroad Company, from its earliest existence, were aware of that important circumstance, and looked confidently to the business of those regions already existing, and that which would undoubtedly be developed by the facilities afforded by the railroad, as one of the surest elements of its ultimate and permanent success."

It was a natural conclusion that the stimulus afforded by the quick and safe transit of the Panama Isthmus by rail would cause a great increase of traffic, and that, by judicious management, the permanent possession and control of the same could be secured. In this case it would not matter though California should contribute no more to the business of the road than it did in 1860, when, according to Dr. Otis, "less than *one fifteenth* of the freighting business was due to the California trade," the remaining fourteen fifteenths consisting mainly of the Central and South American commerce.

These facts are here given in order that the magnitude of the mistake which the Parent Company now made may be better appreciated.

For a long time complaints had come from

Mr. George Petrie, the able manager of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's affairs, on the west coast of South America, that the division of rates for through traffic was not satisfactory to his company; and that the facilities afforded by the Panama Railroad were not, in all respects, what they should be, to satisfy the demands of the rapidly increasing business. At length, whether with or without the knowledge of the Parent Company I never knew, Colonel A. J. Center, who, as already said, had been the first superintendent of the railroad on the Isthmus, and who was then an officer of the Wells, Fargo Express Company, in New York, went on a special mission to Peru, to see Mr. Petrie, and to arrive, if possible, at an arrangement that should be satisfactory to all concerned. He was absent from New York for some time; and I well remember his return to the Isthmus on his way home. He had succeeded in making an agreement with which he seemed to be greatly elated, and which appeared to all who were in the secret a wise and equitable adjustment of the relations of the several companies interested. It was as simple as it was just.

The rates for passages and freights were to be made by the company with which the same originated; and the total charge was to be divided *pro*

## *Chapter VI]*

*rata*, the Panama Railroad Company taking one third, and the steamship companies on either side of the Isthmus sharing equally the remaining two thirds.

The fleet of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company at that time consisted of twelve steamers, which made semimonthly voyages between Panama and Valparaiso, calling at twenty-eight intermediate ports. It was one of the best managed and most prosperous corporations in the world. There was no competition. It had been organized as long ago as 1839, and in July, 1840, two steamers were dispatched from England, and began their regular voyages on the West Coast. The business became successful, and the profits in a short time were enormous. Mr. William Just was the general manager in Liverpool, but the control on the Coast was left entirely to Mr. Petrie, with headquarters at Callao. A large establishment for repairs and for coaling the steamers had been located at the island of Taboga, in the Bay of Panama, under the management of Mr. Jamieson, who was afterwards employed by the great shipbuilders, Smith and Elder, as chief constructor at their shipyards on the Clyde.

I often visited Taboga in those days, and was impressed with the magnitude of the operations

carried on there. Mr. W. G. Sealy, afterwards agent of the Australian line, was in charge of the office, and good old Dr. McDowell, who subsequently became editor of the *Panama Star and Herald*, had his residence, as surgeon of the works, in a vine-embowered cottage perched upon the apex of the Morro, overlooking the shops, with wide and lovely vistas of sea and land.

Hundreds of men were employed, and a large amount of money was disbursed, a considerable portion of which found its way into the hands of Panama merchants.

As already stated, Colonel Center had brought back from Callao a gilt-edged arrangement with this powerful line, under which the Parent Company could not fail to reap great profit. The spider could keep his web intact in that direction, though so soon to be broken by the Overland in the other. And it would not matter much if the whole of the California trade collapsed, so long as 10,000,000 people were still contributors to the Isthmian transit. At this time also a new line of steamers had been put on between Panama and Australia, called the Panama, New Zealand, and Australian Royal Mail Line, to run once a month via Wellington to Sidney, in connection with, or as a "continuation of" the great Royal Mail Line between Southampton

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and Colon. This promised far-reaching results, as it would bring the Isthmus into direct communication with the South Seas and the mighty British colonial empire of the South Pacific, of which more a little farther on.

Colonel Center went back to New York. He felt that he had accomplished great things; and so he had. Yet when he presented the results of his mission to the Panama directory, he was told, to his dismay, that the conditions of his arrangement *would not be accepted*. With cool disregard, or perhaps it were more charitable to say, ignorance of the situation, which no amount of explanation could dispel or argument enlighten, the final answer was given that *the road would collect such charges as it might see fit to make*, and that *that was the end of it!*

In a final effort to bring the directorate to reason, Colonel Center pointed out that Manager George Petrie had declared in the most positive manner that his company would at once proceed to build big steamers for a fast line to and from Liverpool, via the Straits of Magellan, unless this *pro rata* agreement should be confirmed. But the threat was regarded with contempt. The idea that the Pacific Steam Navigation Company would dare to talk such nonsense only made the directors more inflexible in

their decision to charge whatever they pleased for transportation across the Isthmus. The spider got its back up to think that this big fly should make an effort to break away.

But it was soon to be *un fait accompli*, all the same. The bulk of that large commerce was to be turned away into another channel. In the year 1868 regular voyages were begun between Valparaíso and Liverpool, which were later extended to Callao; and by 1874 the fleet consisted of fifty-four steamers, with a gross tonnage of 120,000 tons. Only the smaller boats were sent to Panama, and they brought as little as possible, but acted as feeders, on their return southward, for the Straits Line. The repair shops and coaling station were removed from Taboga to Callao. A staggering blow had been delivered; a great chance thrown away. Had the Petrie-Center agreement been confirmed, and an alliance then formed with the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, it would be impossible at this day to estimate the magnitude of the results.

As mentioned above, a new line had been put on between Panama and Australia, with Mr. W. G. Sealy (who married the daughter of Mr. William Nelson, of Panama) for its agent. It commenced in June, 1866, with the four steam-

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ers, *Mataura*, *Kaikoura*, *Ruahine*, and *Rakaia*, all fine new boats of from 1,500 to 1,800 tons, which were to make a monthly service. The prospects were fair for the establishment of this very important line on a permanent footing. It was to be expected that at first there might be a deficit in the earnings, to cover expenses; but no doubt existed that after a short time, with a little aid from connecting lines, and from the subsidies that would be obtained from the great colonies, from the British Government, and from the United States, the line would prove a success.

It was owing to the lack of such aid, and especially to the absence of liberality on the part of the Panama Railroad Company, that the enterprise failed. Easily could the road have extended a helping hand, and said to the struggling company, so full of promise: "Come along; and if for a time you do not pay a dollar, it will be all right." More yet it might have added, in view of the advantages certain to follow: "Here are thousands of pounds in cash, to be placed to your credit until you can pay them back; and don't worry. Only get your line firmly established; then you can settle the bill." Or still further, suppose the treasury of the road had never recovered said outlay; think of the pres-



tige, and of the final perpetual benefits that would have resulted! But no ideas of the kind were entertained. "I am here, gentlemen," said Mr. Spider, "to take you all in. It is not according to my long-established policy to show favor to anybody. If you cannot go it alone, do not look for any sort of consideration or aid from me. I am not a sentimental spider, nor do I look forward to to-morrow. I must have my daily fly."

Thus, after an ineffectual struggle, during which some money was lost, the Panama, New Zealand, and Australian Steamship Company (Limited) went under.

It is easy to understand why, previous to signing the new contract of 1867 with the Colombian Government, the Parent Company displayed no interest beyond the present. There was doubt if the time of its existence would be extended beyond the year 1875, and it was therefore thought best to make as much hay as possible while the sun was shining. But as soon as the extension to ninety-nine years had been obtained, under conditions which rendered it important in the extreme to secure the largest possible future income, the involuntary question arises: Why did not the management wake up and rise to the level of the situation? Why in

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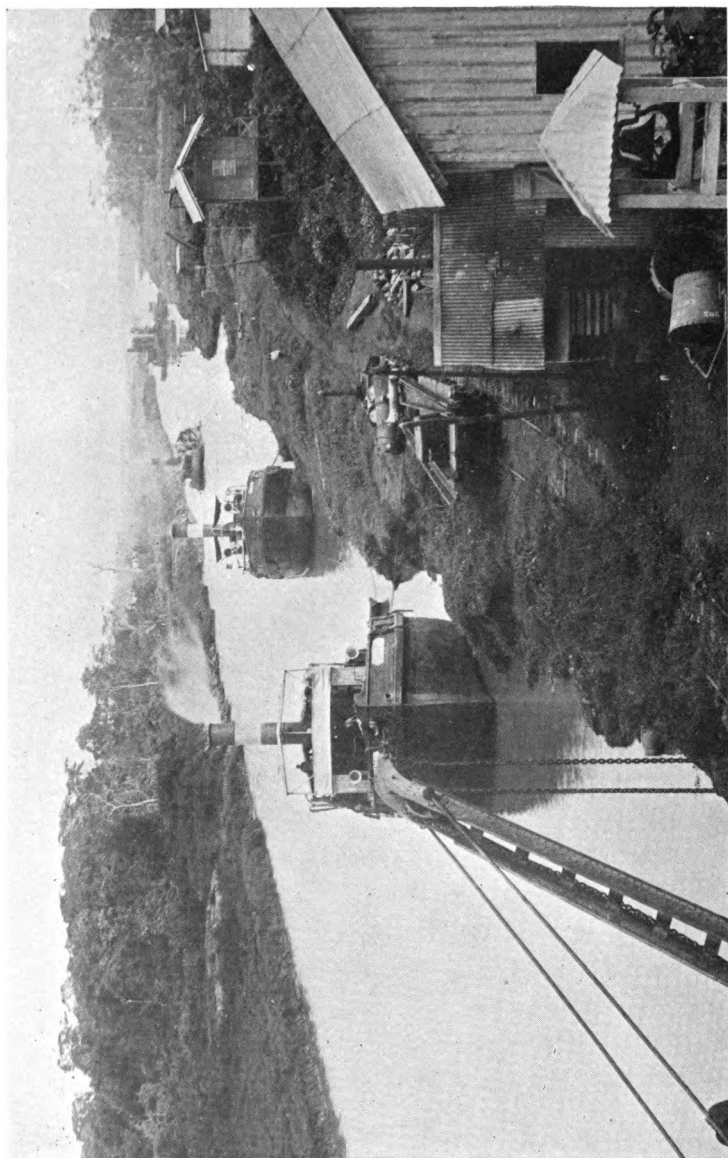
the world did it allow chances involving the loss of millions to escape?

Due respect for the memory of the dead would perhaps suggest silence. But it is permitted to say, without the least wish to blame anyone in particular, that there lacked the Able Man at the head of affairs, of whom Carlyle was fond of writing. No far-seeing and masterful mind emerged to grasp and bind together the more than continental issues of an unparalleled opportunity.

## CHAPTER VII

**I**T would be impossible to estimate the importance of the results which might have followed, if the fortunes of the road had been in other and wiser hands. Its position was unique. A mere glance at the possibilities should have convinced the most shortsighted that, notwithstanding the loss of a large part of the California business with the completion of the Overland Road in 1869, there were still magnificent opportunities for the future. As pointed out, these had been to a large extent sacrificed, but Central America remained, and its importance was recognized at an early day. There were no means of communication with the Pacific Coast, from Panama to the Mexican border, until after the opening of the Panama Road, in 1855, when a line of steamers was organized by the railroad company, and in the latter part of 1856 the first steamer, the *Columbus*, was dispatched from Panama on her initial voyage as far as Guatemala. "The returns from the monthly voyages soon proved





ON THE OLD FRENCH CANAL, NEAR COLON, BEFORE 1889.

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the wisdom of the measure," says Dr. Otis, "for in less than two years the cargoes of merchandise brought from those States, for transportation over the road, often exceeded in value half a million of dollars, while a large amount of foreign merchandise found its way to those countries by the same channel."

It was the beginning of great things. Up to that time Guatemala had not produced coffee for export; even as late as 1860 the value of the coffee exported from that republic is stated by Dr. Otis at \$15,352. Costa Rica had begun, as early as 1829, to cultivate the great staple; and it is on record that in 1850 14,000,000 pounds were exported by the slow and tedious route via Cape Horn to European ports. Therefore, as soon as the steamers of the Panama Railroad Company began to run, a great stimulus was given, in all the Central American States, to the production of coffee; so that the commerce of the coast became important. At first only a few thousand bags came to Panama for transportation over the road; but from year to year the quantity steadily increased, and notwithstanding the large amount that found a market through other channels—that from Costa Rica via Port Limon, from Nicaragua via Greytown, and

from the other States via the Straits of Magellan and California—the amount shipped via Panama averaged 46,500 tons per annum for the five years 1894–98, or 740,000 bags of 125 pounds each. And the amount has been constantly increasing; so that when other exports from those States, and the ever-growing volume of general merchandise imported by them via Panama are added, it is readily seen that if the road had no other source of revenue, this, taken in connection with the passenger travel to and from Central America, would have at least paid its running expenses, and perhaps given a fair profit.

The management of the Central American Line had been left entirely in the hands of Mr. William Nelson, the commercial agent of the company at Panama, who clearly foresaw how great would be the value of that trade, and who left nothing undone to advance the interests he had in charge. As a proof of his foresight, he began at an early day to make investments on his own account in Guatemala, which made him rich. He recommended putting on new steamers, and before long the *Guatemala* and *Salvador*, the former under the command of Captain Dow, and the latter of Captain Rathbun, were running on the coast; while the

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*Parkersburg* and *Winchester* were sent out as auxiliary steamers to relieve the others during the coffee season. Afterwards the *Honduras* was built in England for the company, and the trade prospered until the line was sold to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, and incorporated with their Panama and California line in 1872. It has continued to grow rapidly, although a large portion of it has been diverted to San Francisco, and thereby lost to the Panama transit.

Mr. Nelson retired to his coffee estates in 1872, and after making a pleasure tour of the globe, died there in 1878, regretted by all who knew him. He was a notable man in many respects, and easily among the first of those who were identified with the Panama Road, in ability, tact, and general intelligence.

A man of entirely different character, Captain J. M. Dow was for a long time connected with the Central American coast trade, and afterwards became agent of the Pacific Mail Company on the Isthmus. He was widely known, and many appeared to think him competent, both as captain of a steamer and as agent. It will always remain doubtful, however, how far a narrow mind and violent prejudices can be compatible with a high de-



gree of usefulness in a position of considerable authority.

Among the other captains of the Central American Line were William Rathbun, A. T. Douglas, Hawes, Bowditch, and Whiteberry. The last named was captain of one of the company's sailing vessels between New York and Colon before that line was transferred to the Pacific Mail, the steamers of which company began running on the Atlantic side on the 1st of November, 1865.

The Atlantic service had, up to that time, been in the hands of the Atlantic Mail Company, owned by Commodore Vanderbilt. The Pacific Mail, under the presidency of Captain Allan McLane since November, 1860, determined to control the whole line from New York to San Francisco. The trade was at that time growing rapidly in volume and in importance; and to meet the requirements of the company the capital stock was increased, by act of the New York Legislature, from \$4,000,000 to \$10,000,000, and a little later to \$20,000,000. The old Vanderbilt steamers, *Ocean Queen*, *Rising Star*, *Northern Light*, *Ariel*, and *Champion*, were bought, and three new steamers, *Henry Chauncey*, *Arizona*, and *New York*, were built; so that there was no lack of

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ships for the new service. They were all side wheelers, the screw not yet having been adopted. The stately ship *Henry Chauncey*, commanded by Commodore A. G. Gray, was the first to sail under the new arrangement, as before stated, November 1, 1865. I was passenger by her on that occasion, and remember well the delightful voyage. The late distinguished General Hovey, fresh from the war, was also a passenger, on his way as United States Minister to Peru, and was conspicuous in a general's uniform coat, tall hat, and carpet slippers.

The *Henry Chauncey* was followed by the *Arizona*, Captain Jeff Maury; *Ocean Queen*, Captain Seabury; and a little later, the *Rising Sun*, Captain H. P. Conner. The old Vanderbilt captains were not employed by the Pacific Mail Company. I have already mentioned Captain Tinklepaugh. Captain Jones was a hearty old chap, genial and popular. He was in the *Ariel* when that steamer was captured by the *Alabama*, in the Caribbean, December 7, 1862. The *Ariel* was on her way from New York, with a large number of passengers, including a hundred and fifty United States Marines, and a valuable cargo. She was detained three days, while Captain Semmes de-

bated whether he would land the passengers and crew at the Island of Navassa, and burn the ship, but on account of the large number of women and children on board, be it said to his credit, he let her go. Captain Jones was also a Southerner, and always claimed that it was partly on that account that he was permitted to give bonds to the Confederacy, and to proceed on his voyage, instead of having his ship burned.

On his arrival at Colon there was the most intense excitement, and among other demonstrations of temporary insanity Mr. Benjamin Keeney, wharf builder and alleged poet, rushed off to his room, darkened the windows, lighted all the candles he could get—after the manner of Alfred de Musset when composing poetry—and wrote a long string of verses to commemorate the event. It is to be regretted that a copy of this wonderful production is not extant. It celebrated “Brave Jones and his *Ariel* ship,” and described the state of things on board, before the appearance of Semmes, as “a lovely sylvan scene.” When the *Ariel* was boarded the children all howled, and the ladies fainted, but the gallant and “bold pirettes” restored them (in rhyme) with their “vinegar-etts.”

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It would be impossible, however, to do justice to this work of genius.

Captain Wilson was a small, quiet man, as unlike a sea captain as possible. He had many friends—not on that account—but because of his agreeable ways. All three have been long gone to another world.

Of the captains who followed, in command of the New York steamers, Commodore Gray was perhaps the most popular and best known; although Captain Jeff Maury was regarded as an ideal captain. He was quiet, cool, and reticent, lacking neither ability nor nerve. He was in temporary command of the Steamship *Bienville*, which had been chartered by the Pacific Mail, when that vessel was burned, near Watling's Island, on August 9, 1872. I have always felt a peculiar interest in that sad event, as I was in New York when the *Bienville* sailed, and was to have taken passage by her, but was fortunately (perhaps providentially) detained until the following steamer—the *Ocean Queen*, Captain Baker, and Purser William Connor, who was afterwards agent of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company at Colon.

George William Curtis, in "The Easy Chair" of *Harper's Magazine* for November, 1872, gave an account of the burning of the

*Bienville*, which I recommend for the reader's perusal. It pays a high tribute to Captain Maury and his officers, and closes as follows:

"The stories of those who were saved confirm the fact of the entire calmness and capacity of the Captain.

"There were, indeed, instances of selfishness, and accidents with loss of life. But the nerve of the captain paralyzed all disaster and made safety possible. He knew what to do, and how and when to do it, and his moral mastery alone prevented a frightful catastrophe. His name is Jefferson Maury. There has been no name lately mentioned deserving of more sincere respect. Those who are going to sea will sleep in their berths more soundly if they know that Captain Maury commands the ship!"

The captain, preceded by his purser, William Alpheus Smith, was the last man to leave the burning steamer.

Captain Maury was near of kin to the celebrated Lieutenant M. F. Maury, U.S.N., and was educated at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. He had been in the navy before he became a merchant captain. He remained a few years in the Atlantic service of the Pacific Mail Company, and was then transferred to their China line, where he had the misfortune

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to lose the fine ship *City of Tokio*. He was afterwards employed as an agent for the company in the Orient.

A few years ago he crossed the Isthmus for the last time. His health was badly shattered, and shortly afterwards he passed away at his home in Oakland, California.

The following "personal" and my reply thereto (referring to Captain Maury), which appeared in the *Panama Star and Herald* in September, 1893, may be of interest:

"Amongst the transit passengers who sail by the *Colombia* to-day is Mr. Daniel Phillips. In course of conversation Mr. Phillips made known to a *Star and Herald* representative that he was one of the passengers on the *Ocean Queen* when that ill-fated vessel was wrecked on Watling's Island, some twenty-one years ago. He has in his possession to-day a splinter of the rock which did that noble ship to death, but generously held her on its rugged back, so that she might not slip off into deep water with her living freight. The treacherous Bahamas are responsible for untold marine casualties, which are more or less remembered by their victims; but we will venture on the assertion that there are not many of these who travel about the world with a fragment of Columbus's Landfall in their

[*Panama*

valise. This unique distinction belongs to Mr. Phillips, and thereto we beg to direct the attention of Mr. William Clark Russell."

"The *Ocean Queen*,  
"COLON, Sept. 5, 1893.

"Editor *Star and Herald*.

"DEAR SIR: The interesting item published in your issue of this date, furnished your representative by Mr. Daniel Phillips, will of course be widely read, and may very possibly, as you intimate, afford Mr. Clark Russell the motive for another thrilling romance of the sea. But in the interests of history, I beg respectfully to correct the impression conveyed that the good old *Ocean Queen* was wrecked and done to death by the rock at Watling's Island, of which Mr. Phillips still treasures a splinter as a souvenir of the disaster.

"No, dear sir! Take my word for it that the vessel was not lost on that occasion, nor was she even so disabled that she failed to make the passage to Colon, and back again to New York. Permit me to say that she was in command of Captain Jeff Maury at the time, and that it was owing to his able seamanship that her probable loss was avoided. I do not dispute the rock, nor yet the splinter; but the inference that a disaster followed is entirely misleading. Captain Maury simply backed her off, drew a sail under her forefoot, so that it covered the hole

## Chapter VII]

that had been made by the aforesaid rock, pumped her out, and came on. And when the day of sailing arrived, nothing daunted, he pointed her old nose toward the north star, and let her paddle her way homeward (for she was a side-wheeler) just as though everything was perfectly lovely!

“That was the kind of man Jeff Maury was. He had only just before this event, in the month of August, 1872, shown of what material he was made, in the terrible *Bienville* disaster, only a few miles from that same Columbus’s Land-fall. He had seen every soul safely out of the burning ship, before he, scorched by the flames, went down a rope over her stern into the sea, to be picked up or not, as chance might have it.

“But as Kipling would say, that is another story.

“Let it suffice to be said, my dear Editor, that the *Ocean Queen*, originally named, if I am not mistaken, *Queen of the Pacific*, lived many years after the incident referred to in this letter.”

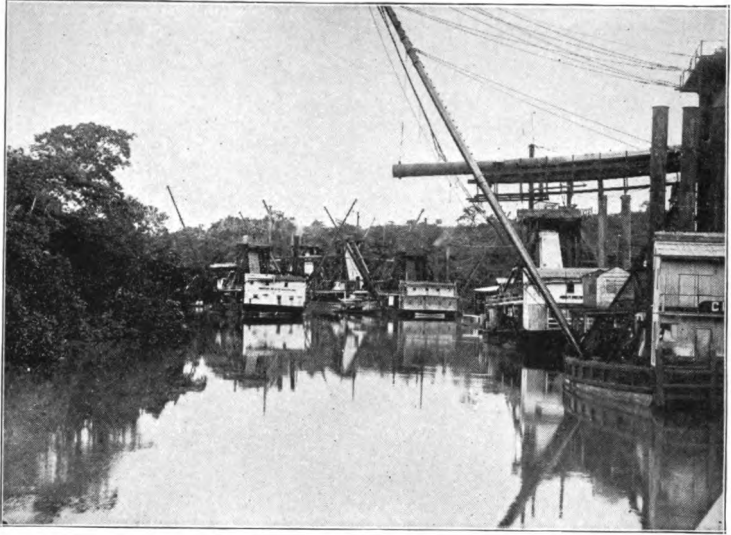


## CHAPTER VIII

THE disaster of the *Bienville* was preceded by the loss of the *Golden Rule* of the Nicaragua Line, Captain Dennis, wrecked on the Roncador (the Snorer), where the old *Kearsarge* and so many other vessels have gone to pieces.

The *Golden Rule* had left New York with orders to proceed to Greytown and deliver mails there; then go on to Colon, and transfer her 700 passengers to a steamer of the same line that would be at Panama to receive them, as they could not, for some reason, be transferred via the Nicaragua transit. This was in May, 1865, at a time when it happened that I had the honor to represent the Government of the United States at Colon as Vice Consul in charge. My friend Captain William Lawrence Merry, then local agent for the Nicaragua steamers, made known to me the fact that the *Golden Rule* was much overdue, and stated his fears that something had gone wrong with her. I then made an official request to Captain George Henry





**SLAVEN DREDGES AT ANCHOR IN THE RIVER CHAGRES  
(ABOUT) 1886.**

### *Chapter VIII]*

Preble, U. S. N., in command of the gunboat *State of Georgia*, and Captain E. D. Devens ("Ned Devens") of the *Huntsville*, both then fortunately at Colon, that they would look up the missing ship. They readily complied, and it was arranged to have the *Huntsville* go first to Greytown, as quickly as possible, to learn if the vessel had been there, or if anything had been heard of her. I went and returned in the *Huntsville*, accompanied by the late Don Demetrio Arosemena, who was then agent of the Atlantic Steamship Company at Colon. Nothing was seen or heard of the *Golden Rule*; but about the time of our return a boat arrived at Colon, from the Roncador Reef, bringing the news of her loss. At once the two gunboats were up and away to the rescue. They found the *Golden Rule* (a fine new ship) a total wreck, but all the passengers and crew, over 800 souls, safely landed on the reef, which is only a few feet above the sea. They were immediately taken off by the two vessels, and landed at Colon about ten days from the date of the disaster, all safe and sound, but the most destitute, wretched crowd that could be imagined. Colon, for once, had its hands full, and it responded nobly. Mrs. Susan H. Smith, then, as for so many years, proprietress

of the Howard House, opened her doors as if they had been the portals of a richly endowed charity, and gave the unfortunates a hearty welcome.

So it was all over the town. The other hotels, large and small, as well as the merchants, were eager to aid the sufferers. In a day or two arrangements had been made for their transfer, and these "forlorn and shipwrecked brothers" (and sisters and small children) were sent on their way rejoicing.

Only Victor Smith had been left behind, at his own request, on the Roaring Roncador. He was an agent of the United States Treasury, in charge of a large amount of bonds and greenbacks, for delivery at the Sub-Treasury in San Francisco. His wife and children had been sent forward with the other passengers, but he had elected to remain by the wreck, a high sense of duty forbidding him to leave the scene of desolation so long as there was the faintest hope of recovering the treasure. He was that kind of man. And there he sat him down and waited for weeks. At last, one fine day, a tall shape darkened the doors of the United States Consulate at Colon, and a hollow voice demanded if that was the official residence of the representative of the American eagle, and if I was

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that representative. Mr. Smith then related how he had patrolled the desolate Roncador, night and day, watching and praying, until a wonderful thing happened. The iron safe, weighing half a ton or more, in which the treasure had been placed, was washed ashore! It had been taken by the waves of the sea out of the wreck, and rolled and tumbled like a log of wood, high and dry on the reef, where he had been able to secure the contents, or such portion of the same as he had thought best to bring away. He was a spiritualist, he said, and the spirits had assisted him. As evidence of the truth of his story, he delivered to me a package about a foot in length and six inches thick, done up in striped bed-ticking; with the request that it be securely locked in the Consulate safe until called for. He declared that it contained the aforesaid bonds and greenbacks, or such part of them as had been recovered.

The general appearance and conduct of Mr. Smith indicated lunacy; yet there was method in his madness. He insisted that a passage to San Francisco should be furnished him; and when it was explained that no provision had been made in the consular regulations for an expenditure so unusual, he became much excited, and

in fact abusive. He withdrew the package from my keeping, took the first train to Panama, and the earliest steamer thence to San Francisco, where, it was supposed, he delivered the miraculously recovered package to the proper consignee. A strange and sinister destiny seemed to follow the poor man, for he was almost immediately afterwards lost at sea, in a great storm, on his way to Puget Sound from San Francisco.

An investigation was ordered, and Captain Dennis, of the *Golden Rule*, was severely criticised for not taking proper care of Smith and his treasure; but nothing was ever proven against him. A curious statement was made at the time, to the effect that Captain Dennis was very deaf, and that he had lost his ship through inability to hear the breakers roar. The bonds and greenbacks apparently failed to arrive in San Francisco; and in view of the controversy that arose, I have always regretted that I did not insist upon seeing the inside of the striped parcel.

In a newspaper article dated Washington, September 25, 1893, Mr. George Grantham Bain made the following statement, which can probably be relied on as correct, in regard to the missing treasure:

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“One of the most celebrated losses in the history of the Treasury Department is known as the *Golden Rule* case. The Government actually lost nothing, but apparently it lost \$1,000,000, and the affair was made very sensational by newspaper publications at the time. On May 18, 1865, the treasurer of the United States shipped to the assistant treasurer at San Francisco one thousand \$1,000 time notes, payable in three years. These notes were shipped on board the vessel *Golden Rule*. The *Golden Rule* was wrecked on Roncador Reef, and the safe containing the treasury notes was never recovered.

“A New York newspaper published the statement that the vessel had been wrecked by her captain, as part of a conspiracy to obtain possession of the treasure on board, that the safe which contained the Government notes had been found broken and empty, and that the captain of the *Golden Rule* and the other conspirators had bought a great deal of property, and paid for it with the lost notes. The Treasury Department waited six years before closing the *Golden Rule* matter. In that time, almost all of the other notes of the same issue had been presented for redemption; none of the thousand notes lost on the Roncador Reef had ever appeared. So the treasurer of the United States entered this million on his books among the notes destroyed. Not one of these notes has been presented since, and there is no doubt of their complete destruction.”



The steamship *Central America*, Captain W. L. Herndon, was lost on September 12, 1857, a little more than four years before I came to the Isthmus. It was the most terrible disaster of its kind that has ever occurred on the route between the Isthmus and New York. The vessel sank in a fearful storm, off the coast of Florida. There were about 600 persons on board, passengers and crew, only 170 of whom were saved. Captain Herndon, who was an officer of the United States navy, went down with his ship.

Among the saved was the "Captain's Man," William Garrison, or "Garry," as he was better known, a colored man from Virginia, whose subsequent record is worthy of note. He was with Captain Dennis in the *Golden Rule*, when she was lost; with Captain Maury in the *Bienville*, when that ship was burned; and with Captain Hildreth in the *Guatemala*, when that steamer was lost on Bird Rock—four disasters of the first class. He was represented as having conducted himself, upon all of these trying occasions, with great self-control and bravery, and rendered heroic assistance in saving life. For forty years he was a familiar figure on board the steamers, and it was only the other day that he went the long journey.

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Of steamers belonging to other lines on the Atlantic side several have been lost, including the *Avon*, Captain Rix, that went ashore at Colon, in the great norther of November 21, 1862. She was one of the large steamers of the Royal Mail Company, and at 9 P.M. was lying tranquil at wharf No. 4. Two hours later, so suddenly came the storm, she was tugging at her fastenings, and soon broke away, going ashore on the coral reef, where she became a total wreck, and where the remains of her massive machinery may be seen to this day. Her officers and crew reached land without loss of life. In the same great storm, the most terrible that has ever visited the port since the advent of the railroad, the steamship *Ocean Queen* was at the Pacific Mail wharf, and was saved by the bravery of Dr. R. J. Bailey, surgeon of the vessel, who volunteered to run lines by which she was enabled to work off and get out to sea.

The United States sloop of war *Bainbridge*, Commander Dominick Lynch, and the United States naval storeship *Falmouth* were at anchor in the bay. When the morning of November 22d dawned darkly through the mist and roar of the storm, it was discovered on shore that both these ships were dragging their anchors, and the *Bain-*

*bridge* was perilously near the reef in front of the present city of Cristobal. There was such a fearful sea running that it was thought impossible to render any assistance. The masts had been cut away, and her guns thrown overboard; yet she dragged and dragged, until the combings of the mad surf on the reef were close under her stern.

What was to be done? Two hundred and fifty gallant officers and men were there, at the mercy of the winds and waves, to be dashed to death and destruction, unless immediate aid could be rendered.

One sees, occasionally, a display of heroism never to be forgotten. The *Avon*, by this time, lay high and dry on shore, and her brave English officers and crew, who had just been in a life and death encounter with the elements, organized a rescue party. Boats were quickly manned and sent out into that boiling caldron. I saw them as they toiled outward, at times swallowed in the gulfs, at times tossed on the summits of the spume-crested waves, until they came within hail of the *Bainbridge*. Then boat after boat came back to windward, laden with the rescued, until there was not a soul on board, and the ship was left to her fate.

It was a wild time. All that day and for days

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afterwards there was no sun, while the breakers "roared for men's lives" through a murk of milk-white mist blown in from the sea. In that single month of November, the unprecedented amount of between forty-four and forty-five inches of rain fell in Colon. Dampness, mold, and rust penetrated everywhere and gloom prevailed.

Strange to relate, the *Bainbridge* did not go ashore after all. She held on, and when the storm was over was taken north, refitted, sent to sea, and never heard of again. It would have been better had she been wrecked upon that wild morning. The old *Falmouth*, her glory departed, was sold at auction to W. B. Johnson, who turned her into a collier.

The *Rhone*, Captain Wooley, of the Royal Mail, was lost in the great tidal wave and earthquake at the Island of St. Thomas, in 1867. The *Shannon*, Captain Leeds, went ashore on the Pedro Banks, between Colon and Kingston; the *Tasmania* was wrecked at Hayti, and the *Moselle*, Captain Russell, was lost near Point Toro, at the entrance to Colon harbor. They were all fine ships, but fate spared them not.

The steamship *European*, Captain J. E. Cole, was blown up at the wharf in Colon, by "glonoin oil," afterwards known as nitro-glycerine. It

was a terrible affair. A shipment of ten cases of the explosive, then a new discovery, had been made from a Continental port, for San Francisco, without stating its nature in the bill of lading. The packages were stowed with the other cargo, and treated in every respect as though the contents were not extrahazardous. The *European* was a goodly ship, and her commander one of the best in the service. On April 3, 1866, the work of discharging was going on busily at what is known as the freight-house or No. 2 wharf, when all at once, about 7 A.M., there was a tremendous explosion. It was as though an earthquake and a volcano in active eruption had been rolled into one. A kind Providence saved me by a single moment. I was on my way to the same wharf, and within a hundred feet of the entrance, when a sheet of red angry flame shot upward to an infinite height, while the whizzing of fragments through the air was like that of a thousand bullets. The effect was paralyzing. The roof of the vast freight-house, measuring 50 by 300 feet, and weighing 100 tons, was lifted bodily into the air, a distance of twenty or thirty feet, and came down with a tremendous crash, throwing down the end walls, and filling the whole interior space with wreck and ruin.

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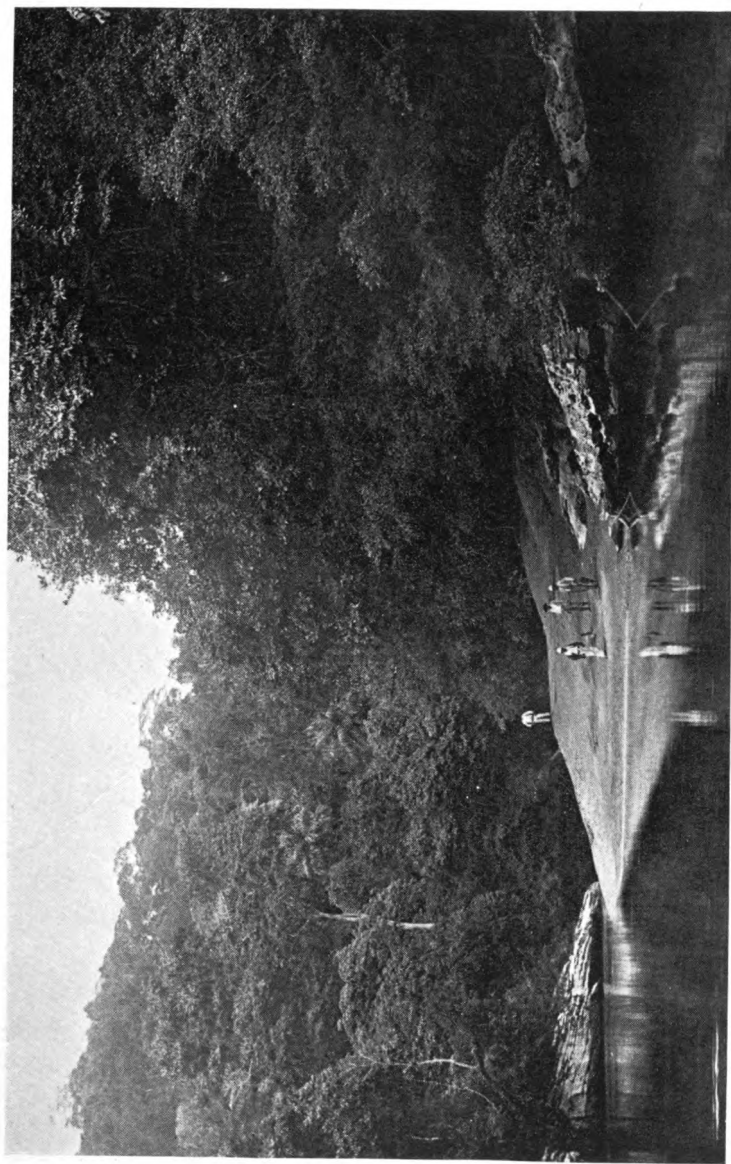
A wild panic reigned. The mysterious nature of the agent of so terrible a disaster filled the coolest minds with a dread of the unknown. What was it? What was it? was asked, without the remotest power on the part of anyone to answer. And when it was ascertained that a large number had been killed (afterwards found to be about sixty), that the steamer was on fire, and that very likely a new and more terrible explosion would occur, the state of things can scarcely be imagined.

Soon it became known that Captain Cole had been fearfully wounded on board; the explosion had wrecked the cabin entrance in such a way that he could not be reached, and he would be burned alive. Then a new horror: several of the waiters had been shut in, with no chance of escape. The ports of the cabins were too small for them to pass through, and there they were, their pale agonized faces framed as in an iron death. The steamship *Caribbean*, Captain Hoar, was in port; also the *Tamar*, Captain Moir, who had been in command of the *Trent* when Messrs. Mason and Slidell were taken out of her by Captain Wilkes of the U.S.S. *San Jacinto*, on November 8, 1861. With some difficulty, Captain Moir was persuaded to make fast to the *European*, and tow her away from the wharf, lest

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the fire should spread, and also lest another explosion should occur.

The *Caribbean* had been considerably damaged by the explosion, being at the same wharf; but she was taken out into the stream, beyond the reach of danger. Then Captain Hoar returned. I can see him now, a tall, resolute man, cleared for action, giving orders, running lines with his own hands, and venturing into the very jaws of death, until he had succeeded in getting the burning ship clear of the wharf, and away to the further side of the bay. Then the dreaded second explosion took place, and she sank beneath the waves, never to float again. Several packages of the explosive that had caused all this ruin had been already landed, and I remember the respectful manner in which they were afterwards handled. They were taken, with great care, out to the Monkey Hill cemeteries, and buried (without prayers), where their terrible contents have no doubt long since become harmless.



VIEW ON THE RIVER CHAGRES, PANAMA.





## CHAPTER IX

**T**HIS narrative is inclined to lap over, like shingles on a roof; or to fly to and fro, as memory recalls the motion of the hand weaver's shuttle in wondering childhood. In fact, it would be rather difficult to give a connected account of this kaleidoscopic Isthmus. Naturally, the affairs of the railroad company occupy the leading place; for until the road had been projected and built there was nothing. Panama was only another name for Nirvana. The Isthmus was a wilderness from shore to shore, when all at once it became a center of attraction as an interocean transit. The discovery of gold in California contributed largely to this end; but previous to that great event, the names of William H. Aspinwall, Henry Chauncey, and John L. Stephens appear as originators and promoters of the railroad enterprise. They took the first steps on general principles; they believed that a road across the Isthmus would pay; but it did not enter their minds, nor the mind of living mortal, that their scheme would prove the dazzling

bonanza it did. That was due, to a great extent, to the yellow nuggets picked up by the quiet Mr. Comstock, in the sluice of Sutter's Mill, in the year 1848. Indeed it is doubtful if the road could have been completed without the aid rendered by the "Forty-niners," and their immediate following, during the next few years. The great rush made it possible.

As Mr. Aspinwall had been prominent in everything relating to the success of the undertaking, it was decided to name the Atlantic terminus after him. It had been called Navy Bay, or The Bay, until February 2, 1852, when, according to Dr. Otis, Mr. John L. Stephens proposed to name the new town Aspinwall, so that "it should commemorate the services of one of the originators and unswerving friends of the road."

The proposition was accepted with enthusiasm, and it was supposed that the name would be permanently established; but in this instance it would appear that the parent could not christen its own child. The Colombian Government decided that it should be called Colon, arguing, no doubt, that Christopher Columbus was a much greater man than William H. Aspinwall. The former had visited the bay in November, 1502, and had named it Bahia de los Navios. And although

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Aspinwall was used very generally the world over, especially by Americans, for a good many years, Colon became the legal name. Even when the commission of an American consul for Aspinwall was made out at the State Department in Washington, the Bogota Government refused an exequatur, on the ground that there was no such place in the country. It was perhaps an ungracious act on the part of a friendly state; and it is probable that Secretary Fish so regarded it, since he would not have a new commission made out for the consul, preferring to send that official out as a commercial agent, for whom an exequatur would not be required.

But of course all subsequent commissions were made for Colon, as the right of Colombia to label all towns within her territory had to be conceded.

For a time, Colon-Aspinwall, and Colon (Aspinwall) were written and printed; and a funny thing happened, if a wreck can be called humorous. A captain strange to the port came sailing in one day, before the strong trades, and to the surprise of all who saw him, held his course straight away past the lighthouse and the wharves, full sail. People looked and wondered, and shouted—in their minds—"What, ho! Sir Mariner, whither away do you sail so gallant

and so gay? Do you imagine that this spanking breeze through the Lesseps Canal to the South Seas will take your brigantine? 'Tis our belief that you will soon be piled up on the reef!"

And sure enough he was! Vessel and cargo were a total loss. Captain and crew were saved with great difficulty. It was thought that the skipper must be insane; but on questioning him, the cause of his strange conduct was plain as day. On his chart was "Colon-Aspinwall"; and was not Aspinwall *after* Colon? "Vat ish der madder?" said he, and could not be convinced of his error. He had found Colon all right, and was simply steering for the other place when he struck. He was an honest old chap; the disaster was put down as a peril of the sea, and his insurance paid.

Later the Colombian postal authorities gave notice that mail matter addressed to Aspinwall would not be delivered, but would be sent back to the places whence it came. Thus, finally, the present name has been adopted, although for a long time, in the United States especially, the old name was better known.

There is another memorial of Columbus besides the name of the town. It is a beautiful and costly bronze, whose history may be of sufficient interest to be related. It was cast at Turin,

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Italy, for the Empress Eugénie, while she was still in power, and was presented by her to the Republic of Colombia, to be erected at Colon. The figure of Columbus is of heroic size, in the attitude of protecting, with his right arm, a naked Indian girl who crouches by his side. With his left hand he is apparently making a gesture of appeal or explanation. The countenance is noble and benign; while the face of the Indian maiden expresses wonder, with a mixture of alarm.

The group was allowed to remain in its case, on wharf No. 5, for two years, until, in October, 1870, Sir Charles Bright came to Colon to land the cable that was to give us our first telegraphic connection with the world. Mr. E. C. DuBois was then superintendent of the road, and in order to kill two birds with the same stone, he obtained the permission of the Panama Government to unpack the statue, and set it up as part of the celebration arranged in honor of Sir Charles and his cable.

A hasty pedestal, not more than two or three feet high, was built of brick, among the tracks of the railroad yard at Colon, and the group placed thereon.

October 22, 1870, was the day appointed for the double event—the landing and the unveil-

ing—and all the dignitaries of the Isthmus were invited to be present. General Buenaventura Correo was then President of Panama. He came over with his suite, accompanied by the Catholic bishop of Panama, and a crowd of notables.

But alas! there was a rain that day, the like of which the oldest inhabitant could not remember. It was a deluge. The people gathered, at least the few whose enthusiasm was waterproof, under umbrellas, around the statue, while the bishop offered prayer, and President Correo delivered an oration. The writer of these sketches was to have read an address, but did not. There was a sudden adjournment—and champagne. Landing day was indeed a wet affair!

Sir Charles Bright was a genial gentleman, given to festivity when occasion permitted. He gained his title of knighthood in recognition of services rendered as an electrician of great skill, when the first Atlantic cable was laid between America and Europe, in 1866.

Thus, since October, 1870, the Panama Isthmus has been in cable communication with all the world. Afterwards a Pacific line was opened from the city of Panama north and south; and now there is another cable, via Guantanamo, be-

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tween Colon and New York, besides a wireless station at Colon, so that facilities have been increased immensely, and the public benefited accordingly.

In regard to the bronze group of Columbus and the Indian maiden: when Count de Lesseps arrived to inaugurate the Panama Canal, at the end of 1879, as he was of kin to the French Empress, and desired to glorify her and himself as much as possible, he asked and was granted permission to remove the monument from the railroad yard to the entrance of the new canal town, now known as Cristobal.

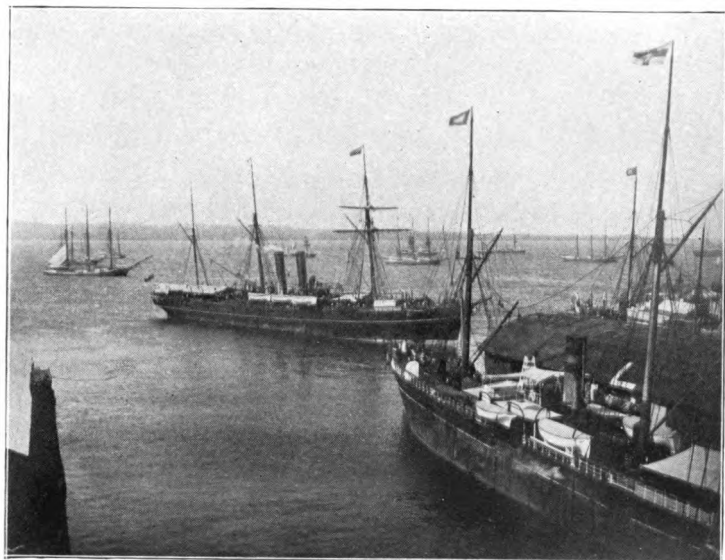
Later it was once more removed, to the point near the Atlantic terminus of the canal, where it now overlooks the ships that come and go during the period of construction, and will eventually mark the entrance and exit of the fleets of the world's commerce to and from the great interoceanic waterway.

After the town had been named Colon, a feeble tripartite effort was made by the railroad company to honor W. H. Aspinwall, in connection with two other leading spirits in its origin, Henry Chauncey and John L. Stephens. A three-cornered monument was erected to their memory, in front of the Washington House, on the beach at Colon looking northward. It is lack-



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ing in dignity, and has no artistic merit. Upon a low pedestal of gray stone is placed a shaft of red granite about fifteen feet high, with a triangular section near its base, upon which the busts of the three men are sculptured. They bear a strong family resemblance to each other. It has been remarked that the company of which they were the founders, and which owed them so great a debt, might have left them alone rather than have placed so unsatisfactory a memorial in that spot.



**HARBOR VIEW, COLON, IN FRENCH CANAL TIMES.**



## CHAPTER X

**I**N June, 1864, I was granted the customary leave of absence, and went home by the old steamship *Illinois*, Captain Babcock—a passage keenly enjoyed. One of the compensations of Isthmian life has been these occasional voyages. During my forty-six years on the Isthmus I have made nearly one hundred single voyages between Colon and New York, besides several in other directions—to California, Peru, the West India Islands, New Orleans, and Europe.

After a residence of a year or two in the hot and wet climate of the Isthmus a change is most desirable, if not absolutely necessary. The system becomes debilitated, and unless one can get away, one is likely to go the long journey prematurely.

It is a great pleasure to recall these various outings, as well as the steamers and most of the captains thereof. Several, belonging to early times, have been already mentioned. To these I would add the names of Captain S. L. Clapp; Captain G. W. Shackford; Captain J. W.

Philip, U. S. N., who was for a time in one of the Pacific Mail steamers; Captains Lima, Porter, Lockwood, Conner, and many others on the New York ships. Then there were brave old Captain Robert Woolward of the Royal Mail Southampton line, who wrote and published "Nigh on Sixty Years at Sea," an interesting account of his life; Captains Leeds and Rivett, all dead; Kemp, who was lost in the *Douro*; Powles, Constantine, killed in the Kingston earthquake, Milner and Jelicoe.

Of the West India and Pacific (Liverpool) Line there were Commodore Watson, who died and was buried at Cartagena; Captains King, Miller, W. S. Wallace, George Fost, Bremner, Baker, Kiddle, Sandrey, Hoar, Peter, Bertie, and Winder, Lund, James, and poor Shacklock, lost with his ship, the *Nicaraguan*.

Of the Atlas Company there were Captain Williams, lost in the ill-fated *Alvo*; Captains Sansom and Hughes.

On the Pacific coast were Commodore Watkins, and Captains Farnsworth, Lapidge, Bradbury, Connolly, Jack Caverly; and more recently, Captains Fraile, Searle, Johnson, Russell, White, Pitts, Chapman; and Taylor, who was lost in the *Colima*.

Nothing can give greater enjoyment to one

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who is fond of the sea than a few days of that sense of detachment, of isolation, of absolute and utter sloth, one is sure to feel far away from the land, where only the great waves meet. The New York voyage is especially pleasant, for it leads among the Bahama Islands, Cuba, Hayti, and Navassa; the last lying like a gem at the entrance to the Caribbean. Here is an extract from an old letter, in which an account was given of a passage out in the steamship *Acapulco*, Captain J. W. Philip, in 1875:

“ The evening we passed Navassa was the most beautiful and memorable of all. We approached the little isle just at sunset, and passed very near it, on the eastern side. The western sky was particularly splendid, with its gorgeous colorings and grand cloud shapes, and when, from the bridge, whither the captain had invited three or four of us, the view opened past the south end of the island, a scene was revealed to be long remembered. The dark form of the island in the right foreground, vessels at anchor upon the smooth water close inshore, clouds of all hues overhead and in the faraway west, while a space of clear golden sky marked the place where the sun had gone down beyond the sea. Flocks of pelicans crossing this clear space, in long lines, as they are used to fly, sharply defined against the gold, completed the picture. An artist might have drawn inspiration therefrom for a great

painting, save that no painting would seem natural with so gorgeous coloring. After we were well past the island, Captain Philip fired three rockets from the bridge, in the gloaming, which were answered from shore, and gave a holiday ending to the scene."

In contrast with this peaceful sunset, at a later time, on board the *Newport* with Captain W. G. Shackford (who has just died, November, 1907), at the same place, a cyclone of the first magnitude was encountered. Navassa was passed about the same hour in the evening as before, and we steamed away into the blackness of darkness that covered the Caribbean in the southwest as with a funeral pall. The sea had begun to show its rage before night closed in. There was a feeling of awe on board that might easily have been heightened to one of alarm and panic. Among the passengers was Mr. Michael Grace, of W. R. Grace & Company, on his way to Peru. He had only recently recovered sufficiently from a terrible accident to walk with the aid of crutches. He and I were sitting in the captain's room, after the black night had shut down, sharing as far as landsmen could the anxiety of the able commander of our ship. The latter showed us his cyclone chart, and explained the wonderful circular action of those

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terrors of the deep, coolly saying: "Now I will poke her nose into this thing up to eight bells" (eight o'clock P.M.) "and if it gets any worse I will try and get her out of it the best I can. And if she don't turn over in the attempt we will then head her for home, and give her all the steam the boilers can supply for a few hours, and see if we can run away from what appears to me to be a terrible kickup down here."

At that moment a sea struck the ship with such violence that Mr. Grace, who was on the windward side of the spacious cabin, was hurled clear across against the other side. Yet he escaped with only a big scare, and seemed none the worse for the tremendous shock.

Before eight bells Captain Shackford saw that he must get out, as he had said, "the best he could." The *Newport* was turned round at the risk of being turned over by the wild force of wind and wave. It was the first and only time that I have seen frightened passengers at their prayers. But the fleet vessel outran the storm, and by morning the cyclone had passed onward to Jamaica, the western end of Cuba, and across the Mexican Gulf, to ravage the Texan coast.

During and after the war years 1861-65 there were almost always war ships in Isthmian waters. At one time I had the coal agency for



the United States Government, and this brought me often in contact with officers of the service, among whom I had many friends. The men-of-war at Panama, as well as those on the Atlantic side, drew their supplies from Colon. The fleet paymaster stationed at Panama for a time, with whom I had many dealings, was Charles Murray, one of the kindest and best men that ever lived. Associated with him were Fleet Paymaster J. B. Rittenhouse and Fleet Surgeon Charles D. Maxwell, both attached to the Pacific squadron, but permitted to live on shore. All have since passed away, full of years and honors. Their memory is dearly cherished.

Later we became sincerely attached to Captain (afterwards Rear-Admiral) George Henry Preble, whose name has been mentioned in connection with the *Golden Rule* rescue. When the news of President Lincoln's assassination came, he was on the Colon station, in the old urgency steamer *State of Georgia*, one of the fleet of side-wheeled merchant vessels that had been transformed into war ships during the Civil War. I had taken, with Captain Preble, by his invitation, a week's excursion to Cartagena. We had met there, by chance, the *De Soto*, then in command of Commodore (a little later Rear-Admiral) Charles S. Boggs, U. S. N., and had

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greatly enjoyed ourselves. The officers of both ships were entertained in various ways; and my sincere friend, the lamented American Consul August Hanaberg, gave a breakfast worthy of Delmonico, to which about thirty sat down.

On the vessel's return to Colon, all the flags of the shipping and of the town were observed to be at half mast. Much wonder was expressed at this; but not until our vessel had anchored and the harbor boat came off did we learn that the President of the United States had been cruelly murdered, at Ford's Theater in Washington, on the night of April 14, 1865. This terrible news struck our party dumb. With blanched faces one looked at another, in speechless wonder, as if it were impossible to grasp the truth. Captain Preble was the first to recover from the paralysis. With face pale as death and voice filled with emotion, he issued a call for all the officers and men to come upon the quarter-deck. As soon as they had assembled he told them the tidings, with feeling so deep and contagious that no man present could restrain his tears. Of all the eulogies of Lincoln the world over, not one could have been spoken with greater eloquence and earnestness. At its close, as I remember it, he said: "The sudden spur of this great crime, by which our nation has been so

cruelly bereft of its beloved head, urges me to charge you, standing here upon this deck, amid these guns, beneath that starry flag, under a foreign sun, now and here, most solemnly to renew your sacred vows to defend and love and worship home and country, as though you were kneeling before the altar of high Heaven, in the awful presence of God."

Admiral Preble was a man of deep learning. He wrote a "History of the Flag of the United States," a large volume of more than eight hundred pages, requiring great industry, patience, and varied knowledge. He also wrote a "History of Steam Navigation," a quarto of 480 pages. It is a complete and valuable account of the introduction and development of steam power upon the sea. I have autograph copies of both works.

He became Rear-Admiral and commanded the Pacific fleet, with the *Omaha* as his flagship. After his retirement he lived at Brookline, Mass., where he died March 1, 1885.

Of other Rear-Admirals, United States Navy, who came to the Isthmus, either in command or in transit, the following are remembered with pleasure: James F. Schenck, who with Charles S. Boggs commanded merchant steamers in the old Chagres days, as detached officers of the

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United States Navy; John L. Worden, J. R. M. Mullany, Reed Werden, George H. Cooper, J. J. Almy, Lewis A. Kimberly, Stephen B. Luce, A. E. K. Benham, John Irwin, Oscar F. Stanton, and Richard W. Meade.

Admiral Almy's flagship, the old *Lancaster*, was in Panama Bay at the breaking out of the local revolution of October, 1873, when General Niera was President of the State of Panama, and General Correo was trying to oust him. I was then in charge of the Panama Railroad, as acting superintendent. The morning after the news came that a revolution had broken out, an American war vessel that had arrived in the night, was seen at anchor in Colon harbor. I sent off an early note, addressed to the commanding officer, informing him of what had occurred, and requesting him to stand by. The reply came back that Commander W. B. Cushing, U. S. N., of the *Wyoming* (or *Wild Woman*, as the negro messenger reported the ship!) had been sent to Colon by his government for the protection of American interests. He would most certainly obey his instructions, and would land a Gatling gun, with a force of marines, *at once*, if necessary. He added that he would be on shore at ten A.M.

It will be readily supposed that a message of

this kind, from so brave and determined a man, gave great satisfaction. As promised, Commander Cushing landed at ten o'clock, and after consultation it was decided that we should go together, by the afternoon train, for a conference with Admiral Almy. We went over accordingly, and spent the night on board the flagship, where the plan of action was resolved upon. A force was to be landed at once, at Panama, to take possession of and hold the railroad station. As there had been an attempt to interfere with the transit, it was also decided to send a guard with each train. To all this the government in power at the Panama Cabildo readily assented.

Commander Cushing and myself returned to Colon next day. The rebels, or outsiders, were besieging Panama, but were reported to be short of ammunition. There was a very uneasy feeling among foreigners as to how matters would turn out. The sympathies of many of the natives who had not joined the revolution seemed to be with the rebel leader, who was, and is to this day, one of Panama's favorite sons. This led to a probably well-grounded suspicion, on the part of General Niera's government, that the rebels were receiving clandestine aid. General Niera therefore wrote me, as superintendent in charge,

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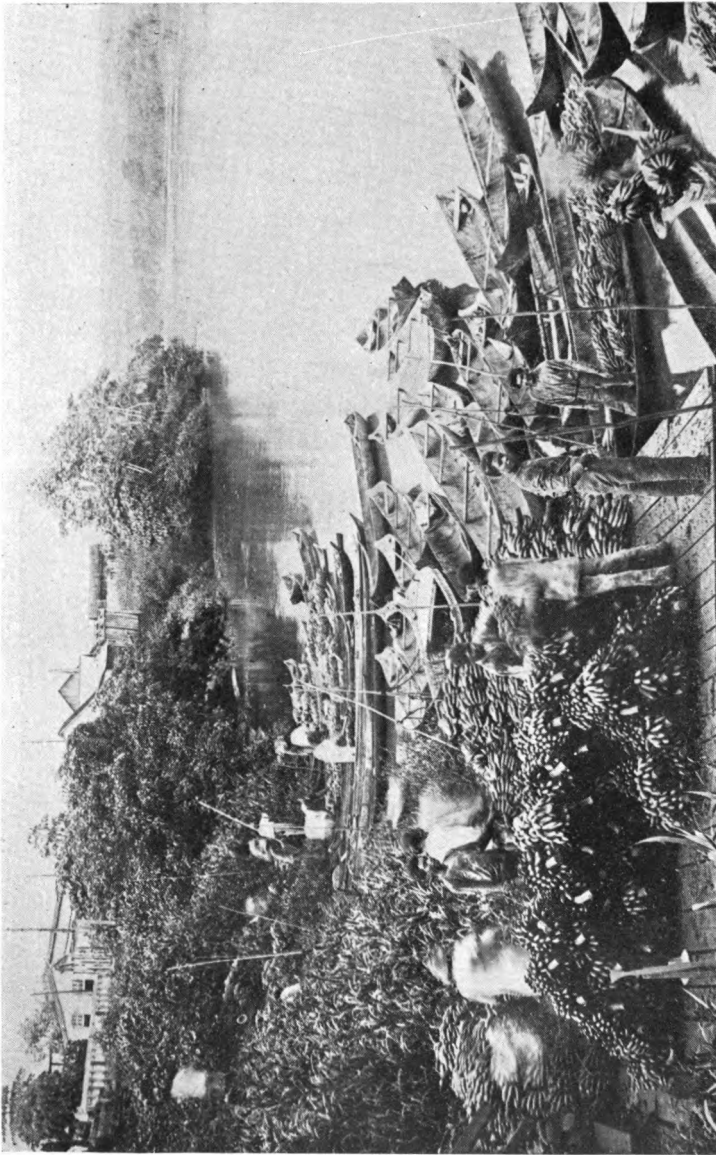
an official letter stating his belief that such was the case, and urging that the trains be duly inspected before leaving Colon, to see that there was nothing contraband on board. Orders were at once given to have this done, and the next morning, sure enough, a capture was made, in the following manner:

The late Mr. Cespedes was very anxious to ship ten barrels of flour to Panama, saying that the people there were on the verge of starvation. If he had sent the barrels in without manifesting special interest in the matter, they would most likely have been shipped and delivered all right. But he was so fussy, and so anxious that the car containing the flour should go by the morning train, and lingered so persistently to see the car locked up, before he would turn his back upon it, that suspicion was aroused, and instead of being sent away, the car was quietly put one side, where in the course of an hour or two the innocent-looking barrels were probed, and everyone found to contain something that did not belong there. A large quantity of cartridges for the rebel guns was fished out and safely locked up in the company's vault, to await further developments. The flour was then sent forward to the disgusted consignee.

This put an end to the struggle, and in a few

days the "outs" laid down their arms, were pardoned, and returned to their homes, and *one* Panama revolution, at least, had a floury end.

Commander Cushing ached for a chance to have a scrimmage, but it did not occur. He was a born fighter, with an eye like steel, and a courage that never faltered. He knew no such word as fail. He was the hero of the most daring and brilliant exploit of the American Civil War—the destruction of the *Albemarle*, on the night of October 27, 1864. That brave act gave him worldwide fame. He died at an early age, December 17, 1874, in the city of Washington.



**BANANA DAY AT GATUN, ON THE CHAGRES.**





## CHAPTER XI

**M**R. DAVID HOADLEY was president of the Panama Railroad Company from 1853 until October, 1871, eighteen years, when he resigned the position, and Mr. Joseph F. Joy, the secretary, was elected to the vacancy. Mr. John Keeler, who had been head book-keeper since 1856, was made secretary, and Mr. Henry Smith remained, as he had been for several years, the treasurer of the company.

The Brig Line, as it was called, formed a part of the railroad company's assets. It was organized soon after the road was completed, in 1855, and was composed of a line of ten sailing vessels between New York and Aspinwall, until 1870, when the business was transferred to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. These sailing vessels, barks, and brigs of from 250 to 400 tons, made regular and rapid voyages, laden with general cargo. They usually came and went either by the Mona or the Mariguana Passage, or by Turk's Island, and often made the round trip within thirty days, including the

time of loading and discharging. They were important as feeders to the Isthmian transit. Their names were the *Idaho*, *Bolivia*, *Xantho*, *American Eagle*, *Magdalena*, *Bogota*, *Costa Rica*, *Arabella*, *E. Drummond*, and *Caroline*.

I was agent on the Isthmus for these vessels, in connection with the fiscal agency of the company, under the title of fiscal and shipping agent. This brought me much in contact with shipping interests and details, as well as with seafaring men, who perhaps of all others have excited greatest curiosity, in and out of books. A strange lot! I have known a crew to stay by and work faithfully until almost the hour of sailing, when without apparent cause they would desert in a body, often leaving pay and dunnage behind. This would give rise to difficulty and delay; for unless they could be found, arrested, and brought back to their duty, a new lot must be shipped in their places. To find a new lot was not always an easy matter. At times beachcombers are plenty in every important seaport, but at other times they are scarce as hen's teeth. On such occasions, I am sorry to say, "larceny of the person," as it may be called, was not infrequent on the part of captains of such vessels. If another craft in port had a crew, means of approach were invented,

## Chapter XI]

generally at night. While the two skippers were taking an evening glass in the cabin, and going through the formalities of leave-taking, after the nautical manner, the mate of the deserted vessel would be with his boat under the bows, where a rope would dangle for Jack to slide down upon. In this way many a crew has been transferred. The vessel outward bound would sail before dawn, and the captain of the other would fill the morning air with an odor of brimstone; but if the two captains ever met again, all would be forgiven over a glass of grog.

Casualties on this line were infrequent. Not one of the vessels was ever wrecked, although the bark *Magdalena*, Captain Whiteberry, was captured and burned by the Confederate ship *Alabama*, during the war. Captain Peel of the brig *Costa Rica* was washed overboard and drowned on the passage out from New York. His first mate, R. R. Searle, brought the vessel through to Colon, and was appointed captain by the United States Consul, to take her home in place of Captain Peel. He afterwards joined the Pacific Mail Company's service on the Pacific side, and later became commodore of the fleet.

Mr. Joseph F. Joy, as secretary and manager, was very much interested in these vessels,

until they were disposed of as stated. The relations between us were close and cordial. His death occurred at the residence of his son, Dr. H. S. Joy, surgeon of Sailors' Snug Harbor, Staten Island, in his eightieth year, April 11, 1891.

The year 1868 was the most prosperous in the history of the railroad company. The spider saw that year the last of its unbroken web, for the Pacific Overland road at the north, and the Straits steamers at the south, from that date took away its prey to a marked extent. It was difficult to believe that success so golden could be so soon checked. In order to illustrate this, I will copy here from the Annual Report of the Panama Railroad Company for 1868:

Total receipts from all sources.....	\$4,337,668.48
Total expenses, including the new	
Colombian subsidy.....	\$2,030,185.52
Four quarterly dividends of six per	
cent each on \$7,000,000.....	1,680,000.00
Surplus.....	627,482.96
	<hr/>
	\$4,337,668.48

These are interesting figures. The statement is simplicity itself. Perhaps in all railroad history nothing more remarkable can be found. Forty-seven miles of track had earned four and

## *Chapter XI]*

one-third millions of dollars, and after deducting generous expenses, had paid twenty-four per cent dividends on \$7,000,000, besides adding over \$600,000 to the surplus. Three years later, or about two and a half years after the completion, on May 10, 1869, of the Overland to California, according to the yearly statement for 1871,

The receipts were.....	\$1,284,418.98
Total disbursements exclusive of dividends	997,875.44
Surplus .....	<hr/> \$286,543.54

There had been a falling off in the annual total income, compared with 1868, of over \$3,000,000; and in net receipts available for dividends and surplus, of no less than \$2,307,482.96.

In April, 1872, Alden B. Stockwell, a bold Wall Street speculator, conceived the idea of capturing the Panama Railroad. Loot was supposed to be the object. He obtained a sufficient number of proxies to control the annual election of directors for that year, and made himself president of the company. The old régime of respectability was ended, and Panama shares became another Wall Street football. A little later, in 1874, Russell Sage made himself president of the company; and soon afterwards Trenor W. Park obtained control. The latter

was elected president, and in 1880 held a controlling interest in the shares, when the Panama Canal Company, through M. de Lesseps, bought 68,534 of the 70,000, at \$250 per share.

The total receipts of the railroad company, according to its annual reports, from the first earnings until the end of 1898,

From all sources were.....	\$94,958,890.36
Expenses .....	57,036,234.46
For dividends.....	<u>\$37,922,655.90</u>

It will not be denied that this has been a good average financial result, extending over a period of nearly fifty years; but there is no doubt that it could have been far more favorable. During the earlier portion of the time the dividends, as we have seen, were very large; but under the fatal policy, then inaugurated and never abandoned, of not looking to the future, later years were wellnigh disastrous. Mismanagement, especially after the road came under French control in 1881, was proverbial.

The sale of the railroad shares to the Canal Company did not change the charter nor the domicile of the company. In fact, the charter of April 7, 1849, from the State of New York, under which the company was organized, expressly says, in Section 3:

## *Chapter XI]*

“The Directors shall be annually chosen at such time and place in the City of New York, and on such notice as shall be directed by the by-laws of the said Corporation.”

Under the original charter the capital stock of the company was restricted to \$5,000,000; but on April 12, 1855, an “Act to Amend” was passed by the New York Legislature, authorizing an “increase of capital stock from time to time; so, however, that the whole capital of the company shall not exceed the sum of seven millions of dollars.”

After the sale of the shares to M. de Lesseps, for account of the French Canal Company, there was much talk of removing the offices from New York to Paris; but the discovery was made that it would be necessary to maintain the American organization. The French owners of the shares, however, dictated to the American directorate created by them the policy to be pursued; but so far as the public was concerned, there never was any visible evidence that the road had passed out of American control.

Trenor W. Park retired after the sale of the Panama Railroad shares to the French Canal Co. had been completed, and General J. G. McCulloch was elected president of the company, holding the position until the election of General John



Newton in 1888. The vacancy created by the death of the latter, May 1, 1895, was filled by Mr. J. Edward Simmons. In the same year Mr. George Whaley was sent from Paris, by the shareholders, as vice-president and general manager, to carry out their views. When he retired, Mr. Charles Paine was selected to fill his place.

In 1868 William Parker, who had been superintendent of the road on the Isthmus since the beginning of 1861, was murdered by James L. Baldwin. The latter has been favorably mentioned in the earlier part of this narrative. He served the company faithfully and well during the construction of the road, and retired with honor. After a few years he desired to reënter the service, and in consideration of his former standing and importance, the company sent him to the Isthmus to fill a sinecure position, with the title of assistant engineer. It was soon observed that he had been greatly changed by dissipation, although in deportment he was still a gentleman. He conceived a prejudice against Superintendent Parker, and openly threatened him with violence. Baldwin's many friends deplored his conduct, and tried to influence his actions, but never suspected that he might be insane.

On the morning of the murder, September

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24, 1868, Parker was to leave Colon by the train for Panama, *en route* for San Francisco. Arrangements had been made to leave E. C. Du Bois, who had recently arrived from New York, in charge of the road, as acting superintendent. This did not please Baldwin, and he behaved so strangely that William Nelson and Perez Turner of the official staff, came from Panama the night before, to prevent by their presence and friendly influence any possible display of violence. The next morning, Parker, Baldwin, Nelson, Turner, and Du Bois walked together to the railroad office, where Parker was to take the train. Everything was quiet. No word or act of Baldwin gave warning of his murderous design. He was cool and silent. The party went through the office to the front balcony, and sat down. After a moment Parker rose, went in to his desk, and was writing when Baldwin followed. Before the other three gentlemen were aware of his intention, he had fired the shot that killed his victim as he sat in his chair.

Baldwin then attempted suicide with the same weapon. He fell and was supposed to be dead, but the ball did not penetrate his brain. Restored to consciousness, he was removed to the hospital, where he lingered for several weeks. At last, one stormy night, there was a

[*Panama*

report that he had died, and that his remains had been taken to Gatun Station, seven miles away, for burial; but no one could be found to vouch for the statement. A steamer left port in the darkness of that night, and suspicion grew into the accepted tradition that James L. Baldwin did not die at Colon.

The remains of Mr. Parker were buried in the foreign cemetery at Panama; where the rather startling announcement may be seen, carved on his gravestone:

HE WALKED WITH GOD



**FORMER STREET-SCENE, COLON.**



## CHAPTER XII

**S**UPERINTENDENT DU BOIS withdrew from the Panama Railroad to assist in building the Oroya Railroad, that climbs 15,000 feet in the 104 miles, between Callao and the Andean summit, over which it passes to reach the famous Cerro de Pasco silver mines and the upper Amazon. He was succeeded by Colonel Alexander J. Center, the trusted chief of earlier days, now reappointed, and again placed in charge. By this time it had become necessary to reduce expenses to meet the changed fortunes of the road. The Brig Line was withdrawn, and by a new adjustment of official duties and relations, I was made assistant superintendent, the shipping agency having ceased. I was still fiscal agent or local treasurer, under the new name.

Colonel Center, though no longer young, was always ready for whatever amusement might come along to color the monotony of Isthmian life. In this he was seconded by Mr. William Nelson, commercial agent at Panama. Both had

the sense of humor and love of fun well developed, and nothing suited either better than to see other people enjoy themselves. It therefore often happened, as had been the case under former superintendents, that excursions were given, and other diversions planned for the purpose of driving dull care away. When it is remembered that there were no roads other than blind trails leading into the surrounding wilderness, no pleasant country resorts easily reached in which to spend a few leisure hours, the difficulties in the way of taking little trips will be better understood.

The island of Taboga formed a favorite resort. This beautiful island, twelve miles from Panama, looking toward the South Seas, lies in the "open door" to that Pacific wonder world. It has three miles of coast line, and is nearly round, with an elevation of about fifteen hundred feet. The summit is destitute of trees, but is always green, while its lovely slopes and many ravines are clothed with luxuriant tropical verdure. Springs bubble from its rocks, and babble downward to the sea. The hamlet or village is very quaint. It has no regular streets. The houses, which have roofs of tiles or palm-leaf thatch, walls of mud-plastered wild cane, and earth floors, are scattered up and down as though of

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spontaneous growth, like the jungle by which they are surrounded.

They toiled not, neither did they spin in that happy island, but lived in contented idle isolation, without newspaper, steam engine, telegraph, or any other modern invention. The climate is perfection; and people often went there from Panama for a change. The French Canal Company built a big sanitarium or convalescent hospital there later, superbly situated above the sea, to which the United States fell heir.

At an earlier date a rumor reached Panama that a supply of coal had been deposited upon the island of St. Elmo, the most distant of the Pearl Island group, for the use of Confederate privateers. It was said that the *Shenandoah*, in command of Captain Waddell (who afterwards lost the Pacific Mail steamer *San Francisco*), would coal there, and then make things lively in and around the Bay of Panama. To combine duty with pleasure, an excursion was arranged with great secrecy, and away we went, on board a small steamer, to ascertain the value of the rumor. The night was spent at Gonzales, one of the Pearl Islands, owned by a pearl merchant named Steffins, who had a comfortable residence there, at which our surprise party was hospitably entertained.



Next morning we steamed leisurely, through the lovely archipelago, to St. Elmo. It was a small island, green from water's edge to summit; and without an inhabitant save the pelicans, one of which I shot and took home for a souvenir. We circumnavigated the island close in shore, but found no Confederate coal. Was it a relief? It would be difficult to say. As all men are more or less fond of a sensation, it is my impression that there was a feeling of disappointment when it was known that the rumor was false.

After the war, General Daniel E. Sickles—a hero of Gettysburg, where he lost a leg—paid a visit to the Isthmus, on his return from an important mission to Bogota. An excursion was planned in his honor to the sugar plantation of the Bayano Company, of which the late Dr. Kratochwil was manager. It was something new to us all to see a sugar estate in working order on the Isthmus. Some of us had shares in it (have them yet!), and all were interested in the experiment.

The Bayano is a fine broad tidal river or estuary that empties into the Gulf of San Miguel, near the Pearl Islands. It forms the Pacific end of what was known as the Kelly, or San Blas, or Bayano route for a ship canal. The distance is shorter than that of any other route,

## Chapter XII]

being only thirty miles from sea to sea; but there is a barrier 700 feet high to be overcome. About twenty miles from its mouth, land level as the sea, and rich beyond comparison, had been selected for the cane fields. A hundred acres or more had been cleared and planted, the canes had grown with marvelous luxuriance, and the promise was splendid. Already the mill had been busy for a season or two, with satisfactory output; but lack of labor killed the enterprise later on.

To this industrial oasis in the tropical wilderness, our jolly excursionists made their way. The boat arrived in the evening; and the next day was devoted to an examination of the estate and to the pleasures of the table. The festive board, although roughly spread, had its charms for our guest, as well as for the rest of us. What appetites! And if the expression may be permitted, what drinkitites! Then what a brave sight to see General Sickles mounted on a fine horse (he had brought his special saddle with him), for a gallop through the plantation, in company with some of the bolder *caballeros* of our party, who enjoyed it like cowboys!

I remember a ball given by Captain Kennedy and his officers, on board her Majesty's ship *Reindeer*, in the Bay of Panama. The rarity of

the event, and the popularity of the captain, were sufficient to crowd the quarter-deck with a charming party. Nothing could have been more brilliant and fairylike than the improvised ballroom among the guns. It was indeed a bower of beauty, with its gay bunting, palm-branch arches, vine-wreathed columns, and flower-framed vistas.

Among those present was the then rather widely known Madame Seacole, an Afro-English woman who had been, it was said, an assistant to Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. She wore a number of decorations, and patronized, more or less, those whom she knew. A queer, quaint, jolly, vain, self-important old brown woman, long since gone "where the good darkeys go." Said she, one day, to a lady: "If you could see me, madam, under my dress, you would be surprised how white I am. It is exposure to the air that makes my face and hands so brown." She had forgotten her curly locks and Dark Continent features.

On the Atlantic side, Porto Bello, or Chagres with its old fort San Lorenzo, or a day on the river, or "up the Line," helped to make the time pass more quickly. And sometimes a circus—Orrin's or Gardner's—would land on these benighted shores; lucky if it were not stranded be-

## *Chapter XII]*

fore it could move on. A menagerie once gave notice in its bills that, as a special attraction, a goat—a live William goat—would be fed to a bloodthirsty lion, in order that the patrons of the show might have the lively satisfaction of seeing the lion eat up William! That night the crowd was tremendous; the negroes went wild. The other part of the performance was soon ended, and the people were eager for the tragic finale. The goat was brought in, with ribbons fluttering from his horns, and was duly introduced to the lion in his cage. Poor goat! he would soon be torn limb from limb, and devoured to a thrilling accompaniment of growls and roars, mixed with low sad music by the band!

But how is it that the king of beasts takes things so mildly? He walks over to the goat, sniffs at him, and with a disgusted shake of his mane, as if to say, "That is quite enough for me!" walks back again, and lies down in his corner.

That was the end of it: the lion did not hurt the goat. Seldom has tragedy been more suddenly and completely turned into farce.

Sometimes the Ice-House, which was an "Institution" in those days, would give a dance and supper; or the Washington House would be loaned the railroad young men for a frolic; or a

picnic would be improvised for the other side of the bay, where the day would be spent in hunting Venus shells along shore, or wandering wonderingly under the cocoanut palms, or the great trees a little farther inland, reminding one of Stanley's African "high woods."

The presence of the steamer *Virginia*, in 1872, caused considerable excitement in Colon. She was an American side-wheeler of about a thousand tons, and was suspected of being a Cuban filibuster. She had been lying at anchor in Colon Harbor for some time, closely watched by the Spanish war ship *Pizarro*, when on April 26th, protected by the United States gunboat *Kansas*, under Lieutenant-commander Edwin White, she put to sea. It was announced that the *Pizarro* would not permit the *Virginia* to leave port. On the other hand, it was known that her papers were all right and in order, as of an American trading vessel, and that United States Consul Charles Erasmus Perry had been instructed to protect her at all hazards.

In the meantime it became known that the small, pale, quiet, well-dressed, beardless, gray-haired man, who had been seen about the streets of Colon during the last few weeks was Captain Frank Bowen, who would take the *Virginia* to sea.

## Chapter XII]

Everything was ready for the departure of the vessel on the day above mentioned; and as the Spanish commander still expressed his resolution to arrest her, and had been warned by the plucky young commander of the *Kansas* that he had better not, it may be imagined that excitement ran high on shore. I remember Consul Perry's pallor and agitation when he came back from a final visit to the *Virginus*, calling on board the *Kansas*, en route. He reported that the guns of the latter ship had been shotted, her decks sanded and cleared for action, and everything made ready for a fight.

This was about 9 A.M. Directly afterwards the *Virginus* got under way, and steamed close under the stern of the *Pizarro*, when Captain Bowen was observed to raise his hat in salute of her captain from his own bridge. Then the *Virginus* was up and away, the *Pizarro* following closely, with the *Kansas* like "a hound behind." The three steamed out in line, the black smoke pouring from their funnels in great clouds; but there broke upon the stillness of the summer air no booming thunder of guns! All Colon had rushed to the beach to see the battle, but the vessels soon disappeared below the horizon, and the show was ended. The *Virginus* easily ran away from the others, and made the

harbor of Cartagena, and later Curaçoa, where she was again detained for a long time, and where Captain Bowen had the good judgment to leave her.

Later she was under the command of Captain Fry, was captured, October 31, 1873, by the Spanish war steamer *Tornado*, and taken to Santiago de Cuba. She had on board, counting the crew, 170 persons, all of whom were held as prisoners; and about a hundred, including Captain Fry and the brave young American general, Washington Ryan, were shot.

Captain Bowen was picturesque and interesting. After the affair of the *Virginius* he returned to Colon, and was for a time agent for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. He also had charge of the Howard House for Mrs. Susan H. Smith. I had many opportunities for learning his history, which, as so often happens, were for the most part neglected. He was the son of a prosperous New York merchant, and enjoyed superior educational and social advantages when young, but was the family black sheep, and ran away to sea. His brother, Rev. George Bowen, was a missionary in Bombay, where he died in 1888. He is represented to have been "one of the most remarkable missionaries of his century."

## Chapter XII]

This is mentioned to show what fearful family contrasts may sometimes exist; for among other things, Captain Frank Bowen had been a slaver and ideal pirate. He was commander and owner of the bark *Nightingale*, engaged in the slave trade; and after several successful voyages to Cuba, with large profits, that vessel was captured, in 1861, on the coast of Africa, by the United States war ship *Saratoga*, with 1,149 black slaves on board.

As he told the story, the *Nightingale* was boarded by an officer who was a Southerner and slave owner, and who allowed him to escape from his cabin, through a stern-port, down a rope, into a boat that took him on shore. He did not remain long on the African coast, however, for by the end of 1861 he made his way in the disguise of a sailor to Boston, where he first learned that a reward of \$5,000 had been offered for his capture and delivery, alive or dead. This made it so warm for him in his native land that he contrived to escape to Havana, where he had accounts to settle for "goods" previously delivered, and where he remained until the excitement was over. He then went scot free, as it could not be proven that he was on the *Nightingale* at the time of her capture. He had the distinction, such as it was, of being the last of the slave traders.



He spoke besides his native tongue, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and was well read in history and fiction. He possessed the born instinct of a wanderer, and

“ For to admire an’ for to see,  
For to be’old this world so wide,”

appeared to have been in every nook and corner of the globe. His adventures had been countless. When in confidential mood, he would begin: “ When I was in Paris,” or “ When the ship I was in went ashore on Borneo, and I fell captive to the savages of that island,” or “ When I was in the chain-gang in Valparaiso,” or “ When I landed in San Francisco in ’49,” or “ When we were boarded by Chinese pirates off Chefoo ”; and would spin wondrous yarns, in which license and freebootery seldom failed to be conspicuous.

He could be kind and cruel, generous and selfish, credulous and skeptical, logical and utterly irrational, romanticist and pure realist, good and bad, all in the same brief hour. With it all he possessed a keen and cultivated intelligence, was refined in his tastes, pleasant in address, blandly unconscious of depravity, cheerful in temper, fearless, cynical in his attitude toward the world, witty if not wise, cool as the west wind, and the

## *Chapter XII]*

last man on earth that a stranger would suspect of the crimes and misdemeanors he so freely confessed and appeared to regard with satisfaction.

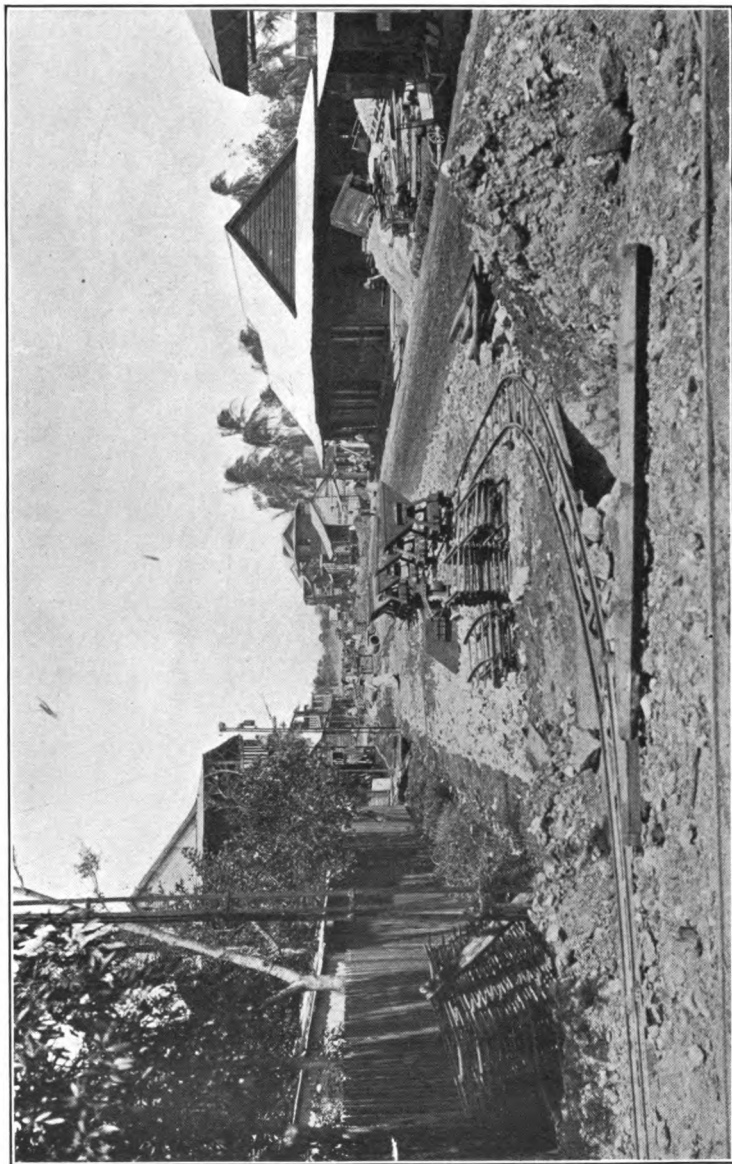
A character to rival Barry Lindon or Margrave, and superior to Rawdon Crawley or Count Fosco, he would have been a treasure to Marion Crawford or Conan Doyle.

At the last he insisted that as God is good, pardon, not punishment, would be his portion, and repeatedly asserted his belief in a future and better world. He left the Isthmus, and his old friends lost sight of him. It was said he had gone into permanent retirement and was writing sermons! His death is reported to have occurred only a few years ago.

## CHAPTER XIII

AS before stated, at the annual election in April, 1874, Russell Sage made himself president of the Panama Railroad Company, and turned the management over to Rufus Hatch, assisted by J. B. Houston. Colonel Center was rudely retired from the position of superintendent on the Isthmus, and a Mr. Corwine put in his place. At the same time a raid was made upon the fiscal agency, of which I had charge, in the expectation of finding something crooked. "How can it be possible," reasoned Rufus Hatch, "that a man in charge of millions of dollars, during a series of years, in an out-of-the-way place like Colon, without ever having been required to give security, has conducted himself with entire integrity?" From his point of view the supposition was absurd. After a sharp legal struggle, in which it appeared that Rufus Hatch had made a serious mistake, Mr. Trenor W. Park, when he obtained control at the next annual election, gave orders that the matter should at once be settled. Accordingly, on August 25,





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**NINTH STREET, COLON, 1906.**

### *Chapter XIII]*

1875, the directors of the Panama Railroad Company passed and placed on record a resolution, by which I was "exonerated from all charges," and the affair was ended.

The removal of Colonel Center in a manner so abrupt was without justification. No man in any position connected with the road was ever held in more genuine respect.

He was born at Hudson, N. Y., on August 8, 1808. At ten he was sent to Paris, to a military school, and in 1822 entered the United States Academy at West Point, from which he graduated in 1827. He served in the United States Army until 1837, and held the rank of first lieutenant when he resigned and took up the profession of civil engineer. Later he joined the service of the Panama Railroad Company on the Isthmus. He was a member of the Century Club of New York. He died at Tarrytown, N. Y., November 2, 1879, at the age of seventy-one.

The marriage of one of his daughters, in Colon, at the end of 1872, to Mr. Middleton, of Hongkong, was a brilliant social event.

His son, Alexander Center, also lived in Colon, and after several years passed in the Orient became general agent of the Pacific Mail Company in San Francisco.

[*Panama*

For the next two years, from April '74, perhaps the least said about the railroad mismanagement the better. The impression that loot was the main object was confirmed, after the retirement of Rufus Hatch, by the first report to the president and directors, made by Mr. Brandon Mozley, as general superintendent. It was dated March 7, 1877. Mr. Mozley had been placed in charge on May 25, 1876, just two years from the time that Colonel Center was relieved. In the document mentioned Superintendent Mozley said:

“Whereas through the year 1875, and early part of 1876, the claims made upon us for lost and damaged freight *amounted to a very large proportion of the earnings of the road*, it is now a rare thing for goods or packages to be missing.”

There can be no better proof than this that the Hatch-Houston régime had developed the noble art of robbery to a marked extent.

But Mr. Mozley was not the man to put up with that sort of thing. In continuation of the report above quoted he said: “The total amount of claims for which this company is liable, during the last six months, will not, so far as I can ascertain at present, exceed \$1,000.” He had set vigorously to work to stop the thievery that

### *Chapter XIII]*

was going on; and he added: "I am glad to say that our force of employees, which has been greatly reduced and weeded out, is now composed of steady, sober, respectable men, who are faithful in the performance of their duties; and that no waste or extravagance can be found in any department."

No more thieves, no more drunkenness, no more employees outside the pale of respectability! It had become high time for reform.

A little longer, and there would have been left only the two traditional trails of yellow rust, to show where the railroad track had been!

One day a switching engine in the Colon yard blew up. A few days later, Engineer Blixt came limping into town, "with a sort of sickly smile," from the Fox River swamp, and reported that while under way with his train, all at once his engine went up twenty or thirty feet into the air, and landed clear of the track in the swamp. He had crawled out of the wreck with only a few scratches and bruises.

Investigation revealed the fact that the engineer of the switching engine was incompetent—a cheap man; and the comment made at the time was that it would not be long before the whole road would be wrecked. People were afraid of it.



But under Mr. Mozley, although a strict economy was practiced—too strict, some said—the road was brought back from the ragged edge of ruin. He was a man “with a history,” but for all that, like Jim Bludsoe, in John Hay’s ballad—

“He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,  
And went for it thar and then.”

And again, as Mark Twain is reported to have said about his first baby, if people didn’t love him, they respected him. His memory was of that capacious and tenacious kind which enables its possessor to retain, for immediate use, whatever odds and ends of practical information accident or design may have charged it with. He had a Napoleonic look, with a severity and reticence in keeping with the character. His early death (from cancer) at San Francisco, while agent there for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, a few years ago, was much regretted.

Mr. H. A. Woods succeeded Mr. Mozley as superintendent. While the former was still assistant superintendent, in November, 1879, there came a flood in the Chagres unprecedented in the history of the road. In three days the river rose forty-six feet, and the iron bridge at Bar-

### *Chapter XIII]*

bacoas was so disabled that traffic was interrupted for six weeks. One of the great piers in midstream had been undermined and displaced, and it was a wonder that two of the six 100-foot spans of the bridge had not fallen into the river. It was a narrow escape; but through the energy and engineering ability of Mr. Woods, who had been given entire charge, the pier was finally, after six weeks of incessant toil, coaxed back to its former place, and traffic was resumed. Many thousands of tons of merchandise had accumulated at either terminus, during the interruption, so that great inconvenience and a considerable loss of business were the result.

It was during the administration of Mr. Woods that the great gold robbery occurred at Panama, the mystery of which has never been explained. The United States Navy had shipped two kegs of gold coin, each containing \$50,000, from New York to Panama, for the use of its Pacific fleet. The money arrived at Panama station late in the evening of December 31, 1882; and instead of being delivered immediately, was placed in the railroad company's vault, to be kept until called for. The next day being New Years, the delivery was postponed until January 2d, when the loss of one of the kegs was

discovered. Of course there was much excitement. Mr. G. A. Burt, then agent at Panama, was absent at Colon, and the keys of the vault were in the possession of one of his clerks; but there was no proof against him or anyone else. Still something had to be done. Fifty thousand dollars in gold ought not so easily and so entirely to have disappeared in a place like Panama—from which the means of exit were few—that no trace of it could be discovered. Therefore a number of arrests were made on general principles, without even a well-grounded suspicion in a single instance. Seven young men, all American citizens, were thrown into prison, where they were detained eighty-five days; but the able and untiring United States Consul-general, Thomas Adamson, was active in their behalf, and they were finally released, without there having been the remotest scrap of evidence that anyone of them had been connected with the disappearance of the gold.

What became of it? That question has not yet been answered, although a quarter of a century has passed. One of Pinkerton's best detectives was brought out to Panama and remained several weeks searching for testimony, but when he left he acknowledged himself beaten. No clew had been discovered, and he could form,

### *Chapter XIII]*

he said, no intelligent opinion as to where the money had gone. And thus the matter rests to this day. Occasionally one hears:

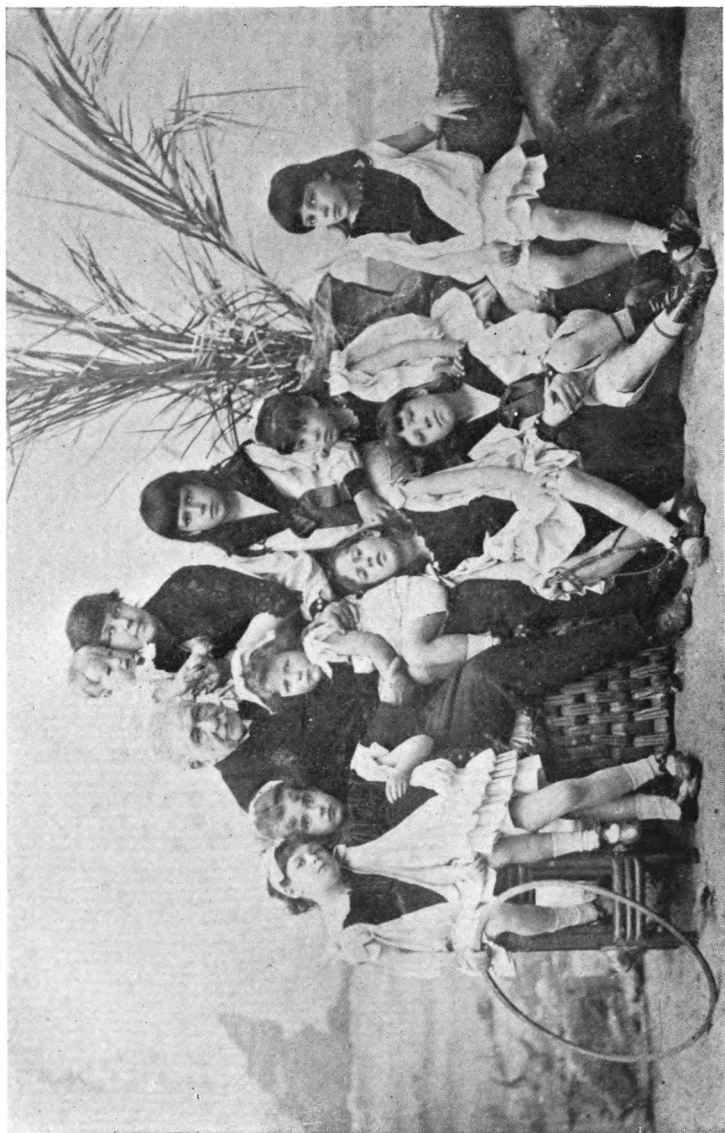
“Who got the \$50,000 of Uncle Sam’s gold?”  
and the invariable reply: “*Quien sabe?*”

## CHAPTER XIV

**I**N the year 1877 Lieutenant Lucien Napoleon Bonaparte Wyse of the French navy, accompanied by M. Réclus of the same service, and others, came from Paris to Panama, for the ostensible purpose of making surveys for an inter-oceanic canal. The party spent several months, during that and the following year, in alleged examinations of the Panama Isthmus. In 1878 Lieutenant Wyse obtained from the Colombian Government, on the strength of his so-called surveys, a concession for excavating a canal between Colon and Panama, along the Chagres Valley, and through the continental divide traversed by the Panama Railroad.

Then, as part of the scheme that had been conceived in France, the International Canal Congress of May, 1879, was called together in Paris, and through the influence of M. de Lesseps, the Panama route was adopted. Ten million francs was the sum paid, or to be paid, to Lieutenant Wyse and his associates, for the concession obtained from Colombia, and for their





COUNT AND COUNTESS DE LESSEPS WITH THEIR NINE CHILDREN.

## *Chapter XIV]*

Isthmian surveys. A company was at once formed, with M. de Lesseps at its head, and called *La Compagnie Générale du Canal Océanique de Panama*. On December 30, 1879, M. de Lesseps, accompanied by his wife, three children, and a large party, including several engineers of note, arrived at Colon from Paris.

Preceding events had caused much excitement on the Isthmus; and when this party arrived there was considerable public enthusiasm.

As one of a committee of reception, I went on board the steamer to welcome the distinguished gentleman and his associates, through whom the fortunes of the Isthmus were to be established upon a basis of pure gold. As is customary in such cases, there were speeches, followed by the informalities and cordialities of welcome. M. de Lesseps responded very pleasantly, wearing the diplomatic smile for which he was noted. He was then over seventy years of age, but was still active and vigorous: a small man, French in detail, with winning manners, and what is called a magnetic presence. When he spoke, the hearer would not fail to be convinced that whatever he said was true, or at all events that he believed it to be true. Thus, during the reception and the conversations which followed, he would an-



swer every inquiry in regard to the canal in the readiest and most amiable manner, and would invariably conclude with the assertion:

**“THE CANAL WILL BE MADE!”**

As an instance, the question was asked: “What will be done with the Chagres River?” To which he immediately replied, as though the subject had been fully considered and decided upon: “It is the intention to turn the upper river into the Pacific Ocean, thereby relieving the lower valley of all danger of floods.” He added, “This can be done without great expense.

**“THE CANAL WILL BE MADE!”**

Why the plan then announced was never attempted has not been explained. It is believed by many to be entirely practicable. The confidence manifested by M. de Lesseps was great, and there could be no doubt about the sincerity of his aims. He was committed to the scheme, fully believed in it as a great and good scheme, entirely possible of realization, and it is my opinion that from first to last he was perfectly conscientious and honest.

I am aware that the world at large does not take the same view. The question need not be

## *Chapter XIV]*

discussed, nor need anything be added here to the already voluminous literature of this famous industrial failure. That M. de Lesseps was an enthusiast; that he did not possess the administrative abilities required for so great and so difficult a work; that he was too old, too eager, too vain of the glory it would add to his already great reputation; too easily imposed upon by men whose first aim was plunder; too ill a judge of character to fill with success a place of so great responsibility; that he lacked practical knowledge, and was always wrongly advised—all these things may be admitted: but when all is said, he was not sordid, not the impostor his enemies declare him to have been.

The mistakes made were many, first and foremost of which was undoubtedly the short time fixed for the completion of the canal. Six years was to be the utmost limit, and four years was talked of with confidence as the term it would require; while it would have been wise to fix the least time of preparation at five years, and the end of the work at fifteen, or even at twenty years.

That was rock number one. Then the fatal plan of replacing each manager with an untried, inexperienced man, full of new plans and impossible notions, every few months, wrought per-

petual havoc with any approach to system. No sooner would one chef get well seated than he would be unhorsed, and another would mount the unruly and at last unmanageable steed. Each one carried the enterprise forward at a gallop toward the inevitable. Not one of them appeared to have any least idea of economy of administration, but each plunged on as though money were an unconsidered trifle. This idea was readily communicated to the rank and file. It seemed well established that only one man should be employed when and where it would be possible to employ two. There can be no doubt that a spirit of venality and corruption pervaded almost the entire service. This in turn was not slow to spread beyond the service itself, and to debauch (there is no other word for it) the whole Isthmian community. From the time that operations were well under way until the end, the state of things was like the life at "Red Hoss Mountain," described by Eugene Field:

"When the money flowed like likker . . .

With the joints all throwed wide open 'nd no sheriff to demur!"

Vice flourished. Gambling of every kind, and every other form of wickedness were common day and night. The blush of shame became prac-

## Chapter XIV]

tically unknown. That violence was not more frequent will forever remain a wonder; but strange to say, in the midst of this carnival of depravity, life and property were comparatively safe. These were facts of which I was a constant witness. This was the condition of things that the coming of M. de Lesseps, accompanied by his charming wife, led to: this, and dismal failure. But the book of fate revealed no picture of the kind upon that bright day, at the end of 1879, when they landed at Colon.

On the morning of January 1, 1880, the party was convoyed by the aforesaid reception committee as far as the broken bridge across the Chagres, at Barbacoas, halfway to Panama, where it was safely transferred, was met by the Panama Committee, and taken by another train to its destination.

There was a banquet that night, at George Loew's Grand Hotel, in Panama, at which the only lady present was Madame de Lesseps, who sat beside her distinguished husband, and gave *éclat* to the occasion. She was at that time a woman of striking beauty. Her form was voluptuous, and her raven hair, without luster, contrasted well with the rich pallor of her Eastern features. She was a native of Mauritius, many years younger than M. de Lesseps, to whom she

had borne, in his old age, a numerous family of beautiful children, dark as Arabs and as wild. Three of them came with their parents; and when they arrived at Colon they knew no restraint. They were dressed alike, and it was difficult to determine their sex. The supposition was, however, that they were girls, as their costume favored that idea. Monsieur and madame walked with me to my residence, and on the way the children were on the rampage, trying to climb every stanchion or post they came to, and otherwise showing their high spirits. I said, "Madame, your little girls seem much delighted to be on shore again. It is a pleasure to see them so happy."

"Two of them are boys," madame replied; "and the other one, her father's pet, thinks she must do whatever she sees her brothers do."

Later, the photograph of the entire family, father, mother, and nine children, much resembling an Arab sheik and his brood, became familiar.

The stay of the party on the Isthmus was brief. M. de Lesseps visited San Francisco, Chicago, and New York, before returning to Paris, and was everywhere received with marked attention; although the American people took no share in the canal enterprise.

## Chapter XIV]

The first visit of M. de Lesseps was followed by a second one, after an interval of a year or two. By this time there was great activity all along the line. Contractors swarmed, and work had been, in some cases, actually begun. In order that the enterprise might have the blessing of Heaven and be officially inaugurated at the same time, with that gayety so dear to the French heart, a numerous audience was invited to Empire Station on the line, to witness the good Bishop of Panama bestow his benediction upon the great undertaking; and then to see what dynamite could do in the way of blowing up a few hundred thousand cubic meters of rock and earth, along a part of the canal where tons of that explosive had been placed for the purpose.

Was it prophetic? The blessing had been pronounced, and the champagne, duly iced, was waiting to cool the swelter of that tropic sun, as soon as the explosion "went off." There the crowd stood, breathless, ears stopped, eyes blinking, half in terror lest this artificial earthquake might involve general destruction. *But there was no explosion!* It wouldn't go! Then a humorous sense of relief stole upon the crowd. With one accord everybody exclaimed "Good gracious!" and hurried away, lest after all the

dynamite should see fit to explode. It was fiasco number one.

M. de Lesseps was a fine horseman, delighting in the most "fiery untamed" that could be found. He would ride over the rough country through which the canal had been or was being located, all day, would then dance all night like a boy, and be ready for the next day's excursion, "fresh as a daisy." In these and in other ways he gave evidence of remarkable vitality and endurance. His good nature, and the optimism of his character, were phenomenal and unflinching. Nothing ever seemed for an instant to dampen the ardor of his enthusiasm, or to cloud the vista of that glorious future which he had pictured in his imagination.

It will always seem a sad pity that this *grand français* came to grief as he did, and that his old age was darkened by the clouds of disappointment and failure. It was his misfortune rather than his fault. Those who desire to read the statements and counter-statements, and all the mass of accusation and recrimination to which this stupendous failure gave rise, will have to look elsewhere. No attempt will be made here to shed light upon so much darkness. It is probable that the money spent—if it had been honestly expended, not squandered through indiffer-

## *Chapter XIV]*

ence, incompetence, haste, conflict of authority, ignorance of conditions, and worst of all, by greed and dishonesty in high places and low—would have sufficed to make the canal. Disaster was brought on by lack of the cardinal virtues of energy and integrity.

The failure came in 1888. It is true that work on the canal never quite ceased, since it was necessary under the Concession from Colombia that a show of life should be kept up. Vast sums had been raised in France, principally from small subscribers among the thrifty lower classes, whose hard savings had been freely poured into the sievelike treasury of the canal company. More, more, more! had been the constant cry; but when at last, in the summer of 1888, M. de Lesseps, accompanied by his son Charles, made the tour of the rich southern French provinces, he appealed in vain. There was no more money forthcoming.

When the news reached the Isthmus, it was like a stroke of paralysis. Few believed that the disaster would be more than temporary, but all too soon it became evident that the end had come. Then followed a sort of chaos, in which the broken fortunes of the many stood in sharp contrast to the good luck that prudence had secured to the few. It was a rude awakening to



[*Panama*

the fact that hay must be made while the sun shines. Improvidence, as usual, bore bitter fruit.

More than 20,000 laborers were left without the means of subsistence or of escape from the Isthmus. They were nearly all Jamaicans. A few took to the jungle, and made primitive homes for themselves, under the rude shelter of which they did not fear starvation, in a land so fertile; nor could they, under a tropic sun, suffer from lack of clothing. But the larger number were repatriated at their country's expense, as the canal company disavowed all responsibility. Steamers were chartered, and several thousands were taken back to Jamaica.

The true greatness (as well as profligacy) of the canal enterprise is shown by the following statement, derived from a reliable source, of the amount expended:

At Panama.....	£31,330,937
At Paris.....	15,628,066
For the Panama Railroad.....	3,730,727
Lottery scheme.....	1,290,587
Paid the Republic of Colombia.....	98,203
	<hr/>
	£52,078,520

Equivalent to \$260,000,000 United States gold.

Only about one fourth of the tide-level canal had been accomplished—a dismal result! The

## *Chapter XIV]*

time had not come. Though the great Frenchman failed, and the sunset of his life was clouded with scandal and disappointment, the echo of his voice it still heard, and there is no room for doubt that at last

**“THE CANAL WILL BE MADE”**

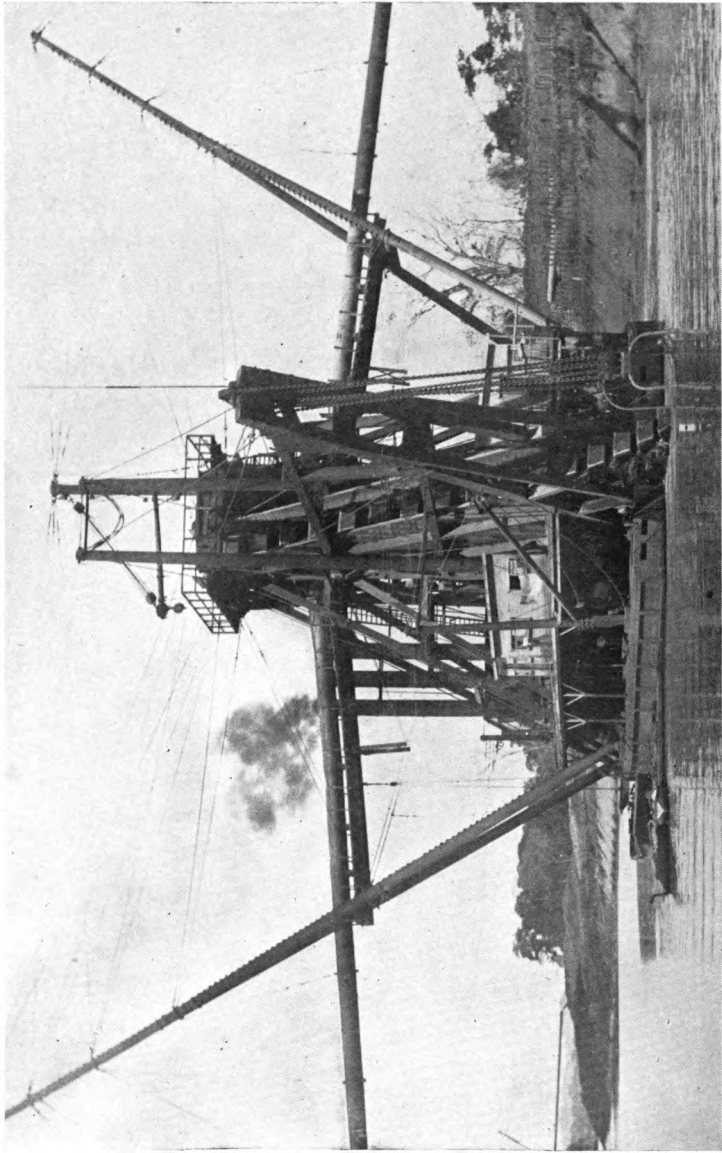
## CHAPTER XV

**F**ROM the midst of this confusion one enterprise stands out in conspicuous contrast to all the others. Good work was performed here and there, by this contractor and that, but it was reserved for the American Contracting and Dredging Company (the only American concern connected with the canal) to gain the credit of having virtually completed the first section, of about thirteen miles from the Atlantic end.

The channel dug by the dredges of that company still shows for itself. With the exception of a few places where the depth had been lessened by deposits from the floods of rainy seasons, there was water sufficient for any steamship that visited Colon up to the year 1888. The banks stood remarkably well, and in general appearance this portion of the canal, amounting to one fourth of its entire length, conveyed the impression of being in every way fit to serve the purpose for which it was intended.

The history of this dredging company, com-





A SLAVEN DREDGE AT WORK (ABOUT 1885) ON THE FRENCH CANAL.

## *Chapter XV]*

monly known as the Slaven Company, is like a romance. The two brothers, Henry B. and Moses A. Slaven, were born in Canada. They both began life for themselves when very young—the former as skilled pharmacist, the latter as mechanical engineer. When the Panama Canal was talked of, H. B. had the finest drug store in San Francisco; while M. A. was in active business in the same city. They heard about the great contracts to be let, and determined to have a finger in the canal pie. H. B., who was the younger of the two, with an audacity akin to inspiration, made bids for several miles of excavation, although he knew nothing of that kind of work. The bids were accepted, and he at once entered upon the organization of his company.

The other brother, M. A., furnished the mechanical knowledge, and it was not long before the first of their great dredges was built and sent out from New York, in which city the offices of their company had been established. The monster machine had hardly arrived at Colon, however, before it took fire and was burned to the water's edge, leaving only a great ungainly wooden hull. This loss was greater than their joint possessions; yet nothing daunted, they went on building and sending out other dredges, until

a fleet of seven powerful excavators was at work, and the company's fortunes were assured.

At first the insurance companies refused to take risks on the dredges for the voyage to Colon. It was even difficult to secure a competent man who would go on board the towing steamer, and superintend taking them out. But the Slaven brothers had the good fortune to meet Captain Sam Clapp, a mariner of the first class, who had the courage to try the doubtful experiment. The machines were like immense wooden tanks, square at both ends, about a hundred feet long, fifty feet wide, and with no more sailing qualities than a house. So long as the sea remained smooth, no trouble was experienced; but towing one of them in a storm was quite another thing. Only one at a time could be taken out. Captain Clapp related that on one voyage, when he was about halfway to Colon, the Atlantic thought it would have a little sport with him. He was on the towing steamer, while only two men were on the dredge, to look after the lines, and to enjoy as best they could a voyage of that peculiar nature. Rough weather came on, with a furious westerly gale, the great hawsers parted, and the dredge went drifting stormily toward the African coast. There was very little prospect that she would ever be caught. The man who

## *Chapter XV]*

had command of the towing steamer made several ineffectual attempts to come up with her, but lacked the nerve necessary to accomplish that rather delicate deep-sea maneuver in the presence of a hurricane. Over and over again he would bring his steamer near, but never near enough to get hold of her, as she was tumbled and tossed almost end over end by the wild Atlantic greybacks.

Then, although it was rank mutiny, Captain Clapp said, in tones befitting the occasion:

“Give me command; and I’ll catch that bloomin’ dredge, or sink the whole blank-blank outfit!”

He took the wheel, in spite of the vigorous remonstrances of his skipper, and next time round he came close enough alongside the derelict to heave a line on board, and his tow was brought through and delivered in good order at Colon.

All of the dredges were brought out safely, and after the first one there was no trouble about insurance.

These machines were wonderful combinations of labor-saving appliances. They surpassed in size and differed in construction from anything of the kind ever seen elsewhere. They were so nearly automatic that one of them could be op-



erated by a dozen men, under an intelligent captain and chief engineer. The principal engine turned the great wheels by which the endless chain of buckets—each one of which would hold a cubic meter—were kept moving. Then there were several smaller engines, always ready for use: to move the dredge forward; to sway her from side to side; to hoist and lower the great legs or spuds by means of which she walked step by step into the material to be excavated; to run the powerful force pump that conveyed to the top of the tower streams of water, with which the earth taken up by the buckets, and emptied into a great hopper, was washed away through pipes three or four feet in diameter, extending far away on either side of the canal; and for other purposes.

The towers were from fifty to seventy feet high; and I often climbed one and another, and stood fascinated and thrilled upon the summit, watching what seemed more like some intelligent antediluvian monster revived, than a mere modern excavator, at work on the Panama Canal.

Two other men, besides Captain Clapp, who were employed by the Slaven Company deserve especial mention. They were Crawford Douglas and Nathan Crowell: the former in general

## *Chapter XV]*

charge, the latter as chief mechanical engineer. Without the faithful, intelligent devotion of these two, it may well be doubted if the work performed had been so effectual. Both possessed a high order of skill and enthusiasm, as well as the physical stamina and endurance that carry men through great stress and strain. It was no holiday affair, for much of the time the dredges were busy every hour of the twenty-four. Upon these two men, who are no longer living, came the principal burdens. Besides these, Captains Ward, Morton, Bardwell, and others rendered important service.

The success of the Slaven Company, though phenomenal, was justly won. I should not like to state, at this distant time, what were the average earnings of each of the dredges; but even at the cheap rate per cubic meter at which their contract was made, the profits were large; as all who owned shares soon had cheerful cause to know.

Unfortunately, M. A. Slaven died before the contract was ended. H. B. went bravely on, however, and when the canal company failed, had managed affairs so well—in fact, with so great financial genius—that he had become rich “beyond the dreams of avarice.”

Associated financially with the Slavens was

the late millionaire-banker, Eugene Kelly. The story of their connection is characteristic, and may be told here without impropriety. In the earlier days of the enterprise difficulties swarmed, and the young contractors became embarrassed. Another powerful capitalist had broken faith with them, and there was danger of losing all. In this crisis H. B. Slaven—a perfect stranger—went to Mr. Kelly, at his modest banking house in Exchange Place, New York, and told him—no doubt with great earnestness and sincerity—just how they were situated. The shrewd old gentleman listened attentively, and said at the end:

“Young man, go away and put all that into writing. Send it to me, and you may come for an answer the day after to-morrow.”

It may be imagined with what anxiety the “young man” penned his statement and awaited the result. At the appointed time he called upon Mr. Kelly, who without circumlocution asked:

“How much money do you require to get yourselves out of present difficulties?”

“About thirty thousand dollars.”

“And how do you propose to secure the payment of so large a sum?”

“By a deposit of the shares of our company,

## *Chapter XV]*

at a price to be agreed on; the same to become your property, in case you elect to keep them.”

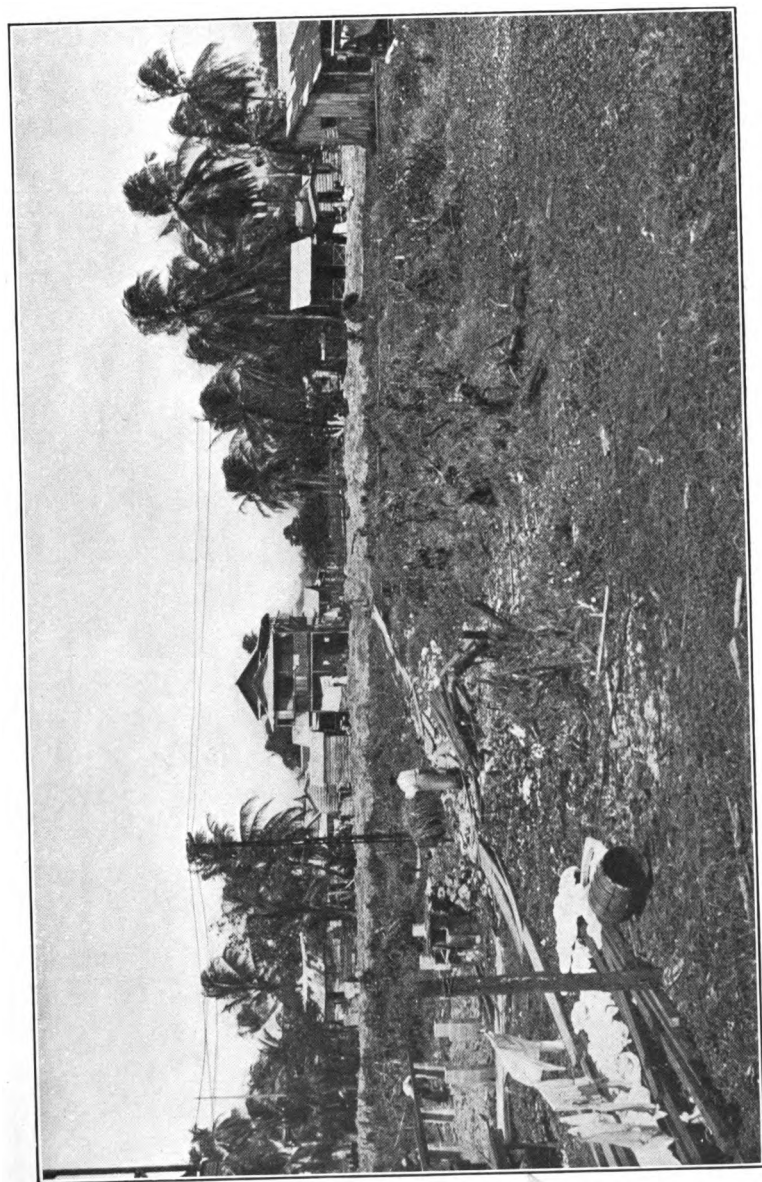
“Well, sir, I have decided to help you; you can have my check for that amount. Report to me how you get on. Good day!”

Before Mr. Kelly received a dollar in dividends he had advanced \$200,000. Then the returns came pouring in at an astonishing rate. There is little doubt that each share paid its lucky owner at least 400 times its par value. In one instance, it was said that the original holder of 1,000 shares, which cost him very little, sold them for \$10,000; and that dividends were afterwards paid on these same shares amounting to \$400,000, before the affairs of the company were wound up. So if it is kept in mind that the original shareholders came in at next to nothing per share, it may be seen how rich a bonanza was the American Contracting and Dredging Company, with Henry Bartholomew Slaven at its head. His early and lamented death occurred December 2, 1904.

After the suspension of work on the Panama Canal, in 1888, the great dredges of the American company were sold to the Maritime Canal Construction Company of Nicaragua, but were never used, although they were all taken safely to San Juan del Norte (Greytown), except the

[*Panama*

one named *Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Whether the name had anything to do with it or not I need not discuss; but she was lost on the voyage between Colon and her destination. Fate could not permit the name of Lesseps to be associated, even in a dredge, with the projected canal of Nicaragua!



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TENTH STREET, COLON, 1906.



## CHAPTER XVI

**M.** DE LESSEPS and his advisers believed it necessary that the canal company should control the Panama Railroad, by owning a majority of the shares. In that way and no other could the many difficulties arising out of the contract of the railroad company with Colombia be solved, and the canal be allowed to go ahead. Negotiations were therefore begun, and a sale of shares was made, under an agreement between certain stockholders of the Panama Railroad Company and the Universal Inter-oceanic Canal Company. This agreement was dated June 10, 1881, and provided that the canal company should pay \$250 for each and every share of \$100 par value, which the aforesaid "certain stockholders" might be willing to sell; that a cash bonus of \$1,102,000 should be paid to the directors of the road; while it went without saying, that in purchasing the shares the canal company assumed the payment of all outstanding indebtedness.

Sixty-eight thousand five hundred and thirty-



[*Panama*

four out of the 70,000 shares of the railroad company were sold under this agreement; so that the cost to the canal company stood thus:

68,534 shares at \$250 per share.....	\$17,133,500
A cash bonus of.....	1,102,000
Sterling bonds.....	4,000,000
Other bonds.....	3,000,000
Total.....	<hr/> \$25,235,500

Payments for these shares were to be made, one sixth cash and five sixths in five annual payments, with six per cent interest. The shares were deposited with the United States Trust Company, New York, under this agreement, to be held in trust until all the payments had been made, then to be delivered to the canal company, and not before. All moneys due or to become due to the Panama Railroad Company, to June 30, 1881, were to belong to venders; so that the total cost of the railroad, including commissions, etc., to the canal company may be stated as \$25,500,000.

This sale was one of the great deals for which Wall Street has now and then been noted. It was successfully engineered by Mr. Trenor W. Park, who was then president of the railroad, and owner of a majority of the shares, which he had been sufficiently shrewd to purchase at or

## *Chapter XVI]*

below par during the depression following the remarkable diversion of traffic from the Panama transit, through various causes already specified.

The career of Mr. Park affords a bright and shining illustration of the facility with which great fortunes have been made during the last fifty years.

Born in Vermont, without fortune, he became at an early age a smart country lawyer. When gold was discovered in California, or soon after, he made his way to San Francisco, where he found a congenial field for the exercise of his talents. He soon became known in the infant city for professional daring, and hosts of clients came pouring in, with bags of gold dust to pay his fees. The shining metal lighted the way to immediate prosperity.

Among the large affairs with which he became identified, and from which a golden harvest was gathered, was the once famous Mariposa Estate, that belonged to General John C. Fremont, "The Pathfinder." I have heard it said that Mr. Park realized no less than \$2,000,000 from his connection with that great estate.

General Fremont died in poverty.

Another bonanza was the celebrated Emma Mine, in which Mr. Park was interested, and out of which he had the credit of having made a very

large sum, through its sale to confiding British investors, who claimed that they had been taken in for £1,000,000 sterling.

During those earlier years, in passing to and fro, Mr. Park had realized the importance of the Panama route, and when the tumble occurred in the price of Panama Railroad shares, in 1867, from about 360 to 80, in Wall Street, he was quick to buy. Years passed; his great opportunity came when the Panama Canal Company was organized, with a flourish of flags and bray of brass, and M. de Lesseps found it of the first importance to control the road. For four years Mr. Park had been fortunate in having Mr. Brandon Mozley as superintendent of the road on the Isthmus. It was shown to the canal company that under the latter's management the earnings had been more than \$1,000,000 a year above expenses; and that in all probability, with the increased traffic that work on the canal would bring, the net earnings would be largely augmented.

These representations were doubtless in the main correct; and with proper management the canal company might have found the railroad the profitable investment it had been led to consider it. Be that as it may, the sale brought Mr. Park and his associate shareholders a profit of about

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ten million dollars. Not much was said about it at the time. In fact, for reasons only known to the parties interested, the terms were not published; but the French canal company was saddled with a white elephant, at the modest cost of \$25,500,000.

Mr. Park did not long survive to enjoy the vast fortune he had amassed. He died on board the steamer *San Blas*, on the voyage from New York to Colon, from an overdose of chloral (it was said), December 13, 1882.

He was a small, delicate man in appearance, keen, quick-witted, intellectual, affable, and thoroughly democratic. He had many admirers.

Mr. H. A. Woods remained in charge of the road as superintendent, until November 23, 1883, when Mr. J. J. Iribé, who had been appointed to the position, took his place. Mr. Woods was much regretted. Mr. Iribé did not speak English; and as all the business of the road was transacted in that language, he found it difficult to get on. Whether for this reason or some other, he only held the position till April 17, 1884 (about five months), when he was relieved by Mr. G. A. Burt, who received his appointment as general superintendent on July 31, 1884.

Mr. Burt had been agent of the road at Pan-

ama, under Mozley, Woods, and Iribe, and had the advantage of a thorough acquaintance with the affairs of the transit, in their various peculiarities and requirements. He was therefore well qualified to fill the place (as he did) with distinguished ability. When he took charge, canal influence was in the ascendant; consequently he was more or less subordinate to the then *chef* of the canal works, M. Jules Dingler, perhaps the most able (or least incompetent) of the long list. But Mr. Burt held fast to his American notions about railroad matters; so that contrary to the general expectation, "French fashions" did not to any extent prevail. His successor was Mr. Frank G. Ward, whose appointment was dated December 10, 1885.

It was during Mr. Burt's superintendency that the great disaster known as the Pedro Prestan fire, of March 31, 1885, swept Colon away, leaving scarcely a vestige of the town. A revolution had broken out in the interior of Colombia, against which the Panama Government, under the excellent General Damaso Cervera, had taken part. In sympathy with the revolution, former State-President, General Rafael Aizpuru, threatened Panama; and to aid in repelling this attack, General Gonima, the officer in charge of a small detachment of national troops at Colon,

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was directed to transfer his force, as well as the entire police guard of the town, to Panama. This would leave Colon entirely unprotected. Before doing so, however, he paid a visit to Commander Theodore F. Kane, on the United States ship *Galena*, then at anchor in the harbor; and according to the testimony afterwards given, made an explanation of the state of affairs to Captain Kane, requesting that officer to assume charge and protection of Colon, until tranquillity should be restored. It is also asserted, on what appears to be good authority, that Captain Kane accepted the responsibility. General Gonima then went to Panama, with the entire military and police forces combined, relying upon the promise made by the commander of the *Galena*, that Colon should be looked after and kept in order. Mr. Pedro Prestan, in sympathy with Aizpuru and the revolution, then raised the standard of revolt; and before Captain Kane or apparently anyone else knew a word about it, at the head of a dozen barefooted rascals with pistols and machetes knocked at the door of the Prefectura, then occupied by the late Mr. J. A. Cespedes, and took possession. No resistance was offered; and when Captain Kane heard of it, instead of giving Prestan notice to retire at once, left him there to do as he pleased. This

was about the middle of March, 1885. Little Prestan set to work with fierce energy to raise and arm a force with which to establish himself master of the city; and displayed ability as leader of a desperate cause. Acts of insolence toward those whom he thought to be opposed to him were common, and a small reign of terror prevailed; although the *Galena* lay at anchor in the harbor, for the ostensible purpose of preserving order and protecting the interests of the interoceanic transit.

Either the Panama Government of Damaso Cervera was too weak to send a force at once to suppress the Colon mob under Prestan, or else President Cervera relied on the promise of Captain Kane. It was not until near the end of March—say ten days or two weeks after the surrender of Prefect Cespedes to Prestan, during which time the latter had recruited perhaps a hundred men, that a force was sent from Panama, under General Ulloa, to recover Colon. As soon as Prestan heard of this, he took two prominent American residents of Colon, Messrs. J. M. Dow and William Connor of the Pacific Mail Company, and placing them at the head of his “army,” went forth to meet the foe at Monkey Hill, two miles from town. There was a midnight skirmish, during which the two gentlemen

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mentioned managed to escape. Prestan saw that his braves would not face the enemy—that in fact they were a cowardly lot—and on the early morning of fatal March 31, 1885, he and they turned tail and came hurrying back to Colon, followed by the opposing force. Seeing that resistance was hopeless, Prestan gave orders to fire the town; and with the exception of a fringe of buildings along the beach, and the Agency and wharf of the Pacific Mail Company (saved by the heroic exertions of William Connor and a few of his assistants), it was entirely destroyed. After an anxious night at the front, where he had been serenaded by the whizzing of bullets, Mr. Connor had reached his post at Pacific Mail House, Colon, in time to fight the flames successfully at short range—so short as to singe his eyebrows.

Although absent at the time, I have thus briefly, and I believe correctly, from information regarded as entirely reliable, told the story of the great fire.

Had Captain Kane taken the bull by the horns in the beginning, Prestan would have been suppressed; a vast half month of insult and outrage would have been averted; and the horrors as well as the ruinous losses of the conflagration would never have occurred.



Many incidents not here related lent force to the argument that the masterly inactivity of the naval commander was inexplicable. For example, United States Consul R. K. Wright, Jr., was seized and imprisoned, and his life threatened in case he should take any action against Prestan. Other grave outrages were committed on the persons and property of Americans; but there appeared to be paralysis on board the *Galena*, fatal in its results. Even at the last, if Captain Kane had sent a force on shore, to prevent Prestan's return from Monkey Hill, on the morning of March 31st, the latter would have been captured, and Colon would have been saved. Captain Kane was master of the situation. He knew that Prestan had threatened to burn the town in case of his defeat; yet he made no effort to prevent the catastrophe and save the city from the tender mercies of a band of outlaws. This clearly shows that a heavy burden of responsibility rests upon that officer and the government he represented. At all events, it would seem that simple justice had not been done to those who lost everything by the fire, through no fault of their own, and were subsequently denied payment of their insurance claims, on the ground that the fire was caused by public disorder.

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It was said that Captain Kane had instructions not to act without express orders from Washington. How absurd! In the presence of a peril so great and a duty so imperative, he should have had the nerve to disregard instructions so idiotic, in case he had received them; else it had been better that he stayed away.

I saw two of Prestan's precious rascals hanged in the streets of Colon; where he also was executed in the same manner, a little later, making it evident that Colombia recognized her fault in permitting the disorder; but no restitution for the losses sustained has yet been offered.

The first day of April, 1885, was a day of trial unto Superintendent Burt; but he rose to the height of the situation. All accounts agree that he was the right man in the right place. With a town of 15,000 inhabitants in ruins; with public order for the moment suspended; the air filled with the clamor of hunger and wail of despair, he, as chief person in authority, displayed splendid executive ability. Cool and tireless, quick to see and to do, he not only then but afterwards, until better days came, earned and obtained the public approval. He had enemies and detractors—who has not?—but on the whole, it is safe to say that no one could have carried himself better in a trying crisis than did Mr.

[*Panama*

George A. Burt at and after the great fire of 1885. It was a pity that he considered it necessary to leave the railroad service. His resignation was accepted December 10, 1885; although he held over until after the first of the following year.



PANAMA HOURIS.



## CHAPTER XVII

**A**LTHOUGH the railroad and its management held foremost place in Isthmian affairs after 1850 until "Canal times," they by no means formed the only interests to which attention may be invited. In fact, the list is so long that I may not hope to make more than brief mention of a few items.

Perhaps the most important is the historic—including the prehistoric—interest, which it is scarcely within the scope of this book to notice at all. The details of the discovery and occupation by rapacious Spain, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, are well known. The followers in the wake of Columbus were brave and hardy men, but cruel beyond description. They were fired with enthusiasm awakened by the wonderlands of the unknown West, but at the same time gave free rein to a lust for gold, and thus became a terrible scourge and curse.

Sir Arthur Helps says, incidentally, in his "History of African Slavery," that when the Panama Isthmus was discovered, the estimated

number of native inhabitants within the limits of the territory now known as the Republic of Panama, was no less than 2,000,000; and that they were considerably advanced in the arts of civilized life. They lived in villages, each governed by a cacique or chief, and without being what is called progressive, were generally at peace with each other, contented, and therefore happy. All this was rudely changed. These primitive homes were invaded, the wondering Indians robbed of their plentiful ornaments of virgin gold, and at the same time seized and made prisoners and slaves. They quickly vanished from the face of the earth, under the cruel Spaniards. Only one family or tribe, known to-day as the San Blas Indians, escaped. All the territory thus held from immemorial time relapsed into the untented wilderness in which it is found to-day. These slumbering hills and valleys, spread out between the two seas in a dream of tropical loveliness, wild and lonely, swarmed with human life four hundred years ago. The records of that time are scanty, the sword rather than the pen having been the instrument in use, but there is no doubt of the substantial facts.

In what is now the neighboring province of Chiriqui, where the rainfall is less and the climate more favorable owing to altitude, remains

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of an earlier race have been found, which possess great interest, since they reveal a knowledge of the arts akin to and probably contemporaneous with that of the Aztecs of Yucatan and Mexico on the north, and the Inca civilization on the south.

I have had gold ornaments of ingenious and wonderful design and workmanship, dating from those remote times; for example, a frog an inch in length, weighing half an ounce, with its legs drawn up in a curious human way. I have also a gold bell, in shape much like a modern sleigh-bell, with a ball inside that makes a tinkling noise when shaken. I collected a great variety of pottery that had been taken from the *huacas*, or burial places, scattered throughout that remarkable region, and although most of it was lost in the fire of 1885, some remnants remain.

To the late J. A. McNeill, of Binghamton, N. Y., who spent years in search of prehistoric Indian relics for the Smithsonian and other institutions, I am indebted for much strange information about the vanished race.

It is impossible to reflect upon the deeds of hardihood performed by the Spanish invaders without admiration of their boldness. In a wild world their courage never faltered. Neither disappointed hopes, nor broken health, nor death



itself turned the tide backward. No doubt religious faith and loyalty to their sovereign had much to do with this; but strange to say, great cruelties and fearful crimes were committed in the name of God and king. Splendid deeds adorn the record here and there; but if we read the works of Irving or Prescott, we shall find the stain of blood trailing through and through. Those were the days of carnage and rapine as well as of discovery. The pioneer spirit was afflicted with a thirst for gore. Panama was founded—the elder city of the name—in 1515; its cathedral towers sent forth the clear sound of their bells a hundred years before the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock. For one hundred and fifty years it had been prosperous, when Morgan the Buccaneer destroyed it. Then for another century and a half, upon another site about five miles distant, the present city was one of the first importance in all America. Its walls, remnants of which still remain, were so costly that Spain's monarch asked if they had been built of silver.

Yet it was not an age of refinement. To do great things was the ambition of noble minds then as now; but the manner of the doing and the means employed would shock the modern conscience. Still there were many purely heroic

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actions. It was within the territory of the Panama Isthmus that the Pacific was discovered, in 1513, by Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. The exact spot is not known; but it was not far from the present city of Panama that the brave adventurer rushed with drawn sword in one hand, and the colors of Castile in the other, waist-deep into the Pacific, proclaiming the discovery his own, made in the name of God and for the glory of Spain. It was one of the great moments of history.

The poet Keats, although he wrote Cortez for Nuñez, set forth the deed in verse that waves as a banner in the breeze of fame:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken;  
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Looked at each other in a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Yet such were the vicissitudes of fortune that the unhappy Balboa perished miserably in 1517, at the age of forty-two, a helpless victim to the jealousy of Pedrarias, who had been made governor of the Isthmus.

It was from here also that in 1524 the terrible Francisco Pizarro embarked on his voyage of discovery that ended in the conquest of Peru,

and the ruin of the wonderful civilization of the Incas.

For three centuries, from 1500 to 1800, the Isthmus remained under the iron rule of Spain. In the wars between Spain and England, Admiral Sir Francis Drake who had circumnavigated the globe died near Porto Bello, in 1596, at the age of fifty-one, and was buried at sea, off Cape Nombre de Dios. He had been accompanied to Porto Bello, in 1585, by Martin Frobisher, afterwards knighted for special bravery at the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Morgan the Buccaneer captured and sacked Chagres, Porto Bello, and Panama Viejo (Old Panama); but his hold relaxed when he and his bold villains sailed away with their spoil. In 1739 Admiral Edward Vernon took Porto Bello and destroyed its fortifications, a feat that Admiral Hosier might easily have anticipated, had he not been under orders from the British Government not to fight. Hosier, with many of his brave sailors, succumbing to disease and disappointment, was buried at sea, off the harbor of Porto Bello.

The hand of ruin has been heavy upon the monuments of Spanish power and glory, left behind in the form of church and fort and city wall and paved highway; yet traces of the cruel mother's grandeur in that great era may still be

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seen. Near the church on the hill at Cruces, ten miles from Panama, there is an anchor that weighs two tons. It was brought there, perhaps by way of the river, perhaps over hill and dale by the paved road from Porto Bello; and it will excite the wonder of the passer-by, as it did mine, so long as iron shall endure. It was left where it is by no puny weaklings, but by

“ Men from the sunless plain,  
Made strong and brave by familiar pain.”

During the early part of last century the yoke of Spain was thrown off. Since then conditions have not been favorable, yet out of the turmoil of revolutionary changes has come an era of recent peace and progress to Panama.

The geographical interest of the Panama Isthmus is of the first importance. Reference to the map will show its unique position, between two seas and two continents. It would seem as though Nature had intended to leave a gap or passage, but had changed her imperial mind when she placed the present barrier. It is so small as to challenge the enterprise of man for its removal, and yet so large as to require the most strenuous and heroic efforts.

The position of Colon is  $9^{\circ} 22'$  north, and  $79^{\circ} 55'$  west; of Panama,  $8^{\circ} 57'$  north,  $79^{\circ}$

32' west. It will therefore be seen that the latter city, on the Pacific, is south and east of the former, on the Atlantic or Caribbean. The land narrows and takes a remarkable bend to the eastward and northward, as it comes down from the Central American coast; as though it would form a second Yucatan. But after describing a great half circle it is again deflected southward, and widens into the southern continent. To a resident of Colon it will always seem strange that the sun rises inland and sets beyond the sea; in other words, that east seems west and west east. Nor is it easy to reconcile the fact mentioned—that Panama is southeast of Colon—with the inherited geographical idea that all points on the Pacific should be west of all points on the Atlantic. There is a suspicion of something crooked about this.

Almost directly west of Colon, ninety miles away, is the Chiriqui Lagoon, at one of the entrances to which is the town of Bocas del Toro; while at the east the bow of the arching land swells still northward, until it has passed Porto Bello, twenty miles distant, and then bears to the east and south, forming the Gulf of Darien, into which the River Atrato empties.

The narrowest place is at the Gulf of San Blas, about sixty miles east of Colon, where the

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Isthmus is no more than thirty miles wide, as noted in speaking of the Bayano River that flows into the Pacific.

The general lay of the land is east and west; and the distance from the Atrato, where the Republic of Panama ends, to the frontier of Costa Rica, along the coast line on the Atlantic, is 379 miles; while the Pacific coast line is 674 miles. The average width of the Isthmus being estimated at eighty miles, we may therefore say that the area is about 32,000 square miles. This would give a territory about two thirds as large as the great State of Pennsylvania, that has a population of 6,000,000.

Along both coasts are many bays and lovely islands, which form shelter for vessels, and will some day be desirable for plantations of coconuts and other tropical productions, as well as for the delightful insular homes of a future population. They are for the most part unoccupied at the present day, except by stray nomads of the colored race, who have established squatter sovereignty here and there, and like Selkirk are monarchs of all they survey.

The present estimated population of the Republic of Panama is 300,000, or about ten to the square mile. There is no doubt that ten times the number, say 3,000,000 souls, could live in

great comfort and prosperity within the total limits.

There are numerous rivers within Isthmian territory, the largest and longest of which is the Chagres, with its many tributaries and extensive watershed. Owing to the proximity of the two coasts, it is not possible for the rivers to be of great length. The Chagres is, however, at all seasons, a stream of considerable importance, and in time of flood a terror. It was navigable for small craft as far as Cruces, within ten miles of Panama, in the days before the railroad; and even now boats of the natives carry much local freight, to and from points as far as Matachin, (about thirty miles).

The best portion of the republic is doubtless toward the west, adjoining the Costa Rican boundary. Eastward the land has a less general elevation, and is therefore not so salubrious. Most of it is still unoccupied, and in fact unexplored. The sad fate of the expedition under Lieutenant Strain, U. S. N., in 1854, will be remembered. We are informed that in January of that year three war ships were sent to Caledonia Bay, in the Gulf of Darien, for the purpose of making an examination of that route for an interoceanic canal. They were the United States sailing sloop *Cyane*, Commander Hollins

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(who subsequently bombarded Greytown); the French steam sloop *Chimère*, and the British steam sloop *Espiègle*. The *Devastation*, also a British war vessel, joined the expedition later.

The *Cyane* was the only ship that landed a party equipped to make a survey. This was led by Lieutenant Strain, and was made up of twenty-seven men, all told, including Señores Castilla and Polanco, commissioners sent by the New Granadian Government to accompany the expedition.

The start was made from Caledonia Bay, on January 20th, with the intention of crossing the Isthmus to the Gulf of San Miguel on the Pacific coast. At first the Indians were friendly, or appeared to be so, and served as guides; but after a few days they deserted the surveying party in the depths of the tropical wilderness. The party then became hopelessly bewildered, the food supply failed, and one third of the number, including the two government commissioners, perished from exposure and starvation. The account states, strangely enough, that nothing in those interminable leafy solitudes—in the shape of vegetable or fruit or bird or beast or reptile—was encountered that could sustain life. After ninety-five terrible days of suspense and suffering, Lieutenant Strain and two or three others



made their way to the Pacific, were rescued by a friendly Spanish native, and taken to Panama. The other surviving members of the sorrowful expedition at last returned to Caledonia Bay in complete exhaustion. Lieutenant Strain died, and his remains were buried at Colon, to be afterwards exhumed and taken to the United States.

There have been several more recent explorations of the Isthmian region; notably those under Lieutenant Collins, and under Commanders T. O. Selfridge and E. P. Lull, U. S. N.; also, latest of all, under Lieutenant N. B. Wyse.

The Selfridge survey, as it has been called, was undertaken in the interests of the canal that General Grant, when President, hoped to see made. There had been rumors and reports that a pass existed in the mountains to the eastward of Colon, by which boats could go, in the rainy season, to the headwaters of a stream on *one* side, so near to those of a stream on the *other* side that only a very short and easy portage intervened.

So much attention was paid to this that a Mr. Lacharme, who had spent much time among the natives of the region, and was supposed to know of the aforesaid pass, was sent for and brought from Cartagena; but he failed to find it.

Mr. Gisborne and Dr. Cullin, who had been sent out by English capitalists, also contributed

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to what proved a hallucination, as did worthy Captain Hogg, a mariner who had long traded on the coast. No such depression of the Andean cordillera, which forms the backbone of the Isthmus, was found to exist. Indeed, the present route of the Panama Railroad is the only one of so little elevation in the whole region.

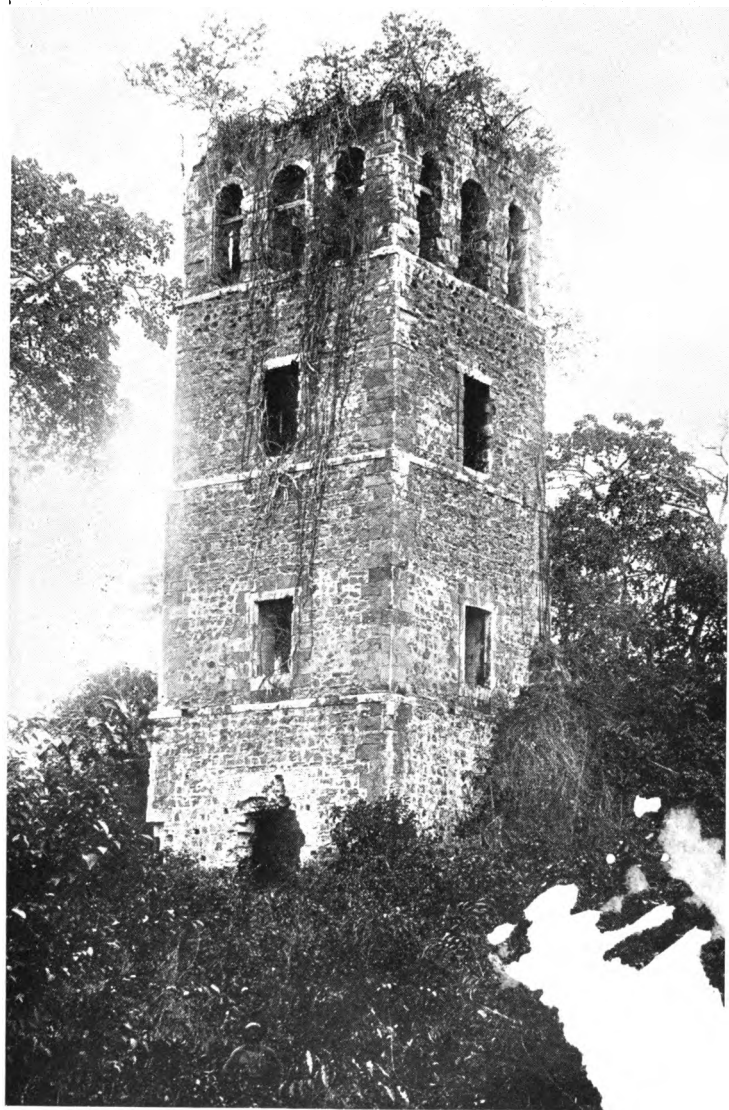
These several explorations have done much to make Isthmian geography familiar; yet extensive primeval solitudes remain, which have never been penetrated by white men, during the four hundred years since the New World emerged from the unknown.

Colon and Panama are about midway between the two ends of the republic; and while the whole area is thinly settled, as the total population shows, the western half contains by far the larger portion. It embraces Veraguas—where Columbus landed, at the river Belen, and endeavored to plant a colony under his brother Bartolome—and Chiriqui, where President Lincoln wished to establish a settlement of freedmen, after his Proclamation of Emancipation. There are no finer lands, nor is there a better climate on the face of the globe than these provinces offer.

Had the celebrated William Paterson, (who founded the Bank of England,) established his ill-fated colony of 2,500 brave and hardy Scots,

in 1698, among the verdant hills of Veraguas and Chiriqui, instead of on the low shores of Caledonia Bay, in the Darien, his venture might not have been a dismal and tragic failure, but a great success. Jamaica, recently wrested from Spain by Cromwell, was at that time the nearest English settlement to Caledonia Bay; but the Scotch colonists applied in vain to the government of that island for help in their distress. Beeston was governor of Jamaica, and had received orders from King William III of England to extend no aid. At last, however, after the larger portion of the colonists had perished at the Darien, as many as could be brought away in a single small vessel were permitted to land and seek homes in Jamaica. Other survivors were carried to the British Colonies, now the United States.

The geographical features of the Isthmus are thus found to be of great interest, and its position relative to all other countries has not failed to attract universal attention. It is a pivot—a central point toward which a large share of the commerce of the whole world must gravitate, to its various destinations.



TOWER OF SAN JEROMÉ AT OLD PANAMA, OVER  
YEARS OLD.



## CHAPTER XVIII

**I**N a certain passage of "The Martyrdom of Man," Winwood Reade speaks of "the monotony of eternal change." The expression may be borrowed and applied to the political affairs of the Panama Isthmus, from 1855 to a recent date. It would have been difficult to keep exact account of the many changes that have occurred in the government, nearly all of which have been brought about by revolutions.

The late Governor Arango favored me with a record of the names and dates of chief magistrates, which shows that thirty-four, including himself, served in that office from July, 1855 to the date of his death in 1898. Governor Facundo Mutis-Duran, who succeeded him, was the thirty-fifth. The list, which will be found in the appendix, forms a curious commentary on so-called republican history. The first name is that of Justo Arosemena, a native of Panama and one of her most distinguished sons. He served his country faithfully in many situations of trust and responsibility, local and national, and was al-

ways held in the highest esteem. He was minister from Bogota to Washington, London, and Paris; conducted delicate and difficult negotiations with the neighboring republics; was senator and cabinet minister; made and signed treaties; and in short, filled nearly every post of responsibility and honor in his country's gift. He possessed great abilities, and was withal a man of a pleasing personality, that made intercourse delightful and endeared him to all. His mind and character were noble. It was my good fortune to know him somewhat intimately for years; and it gratifies me to have the present opportunity of paying this tribute to his memory. He died at Colon, February 23, 1896, at the age of seventy-eight.

Rafael Nuñez, fifth on the list, was another statesman of wide renown, who left the impress of brilliant powers upon the history of his country. He and Justo Arosemena were ardent liberals in their younger days, as well as intimate political and personal friends. As time passed, however, Dr. Nuñez took more conservative views. At least he became less enthusiastic in regard to the republic, and adopted ideas which he considered more in accordance with the needs and conditions of a somewhat backward civilization. That he was right, or at least politic and

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sagacious, is proven by his elevation to the presidency of Colombia, which position he held, with brief interruptions, until his death. He was in many respects, as politician, patriot, and poet, one of the ablest and most celebrated public men of his time.

Manuel Maria Diaz was provisional governor in 1862. He was highly esteemed as a quiet, order-loving, respectable citizen. He had been governor at an earlier date, during the construction of the railroad, when the wild rush to California was at its height, and had gained much credit for friendliness and forbearance shown to foreigners.

General Santacoloma was a dashing young soldier, who had been brought to the front by the Mosquera revolution.

Messrs. Calancha, Jil Colunje and Olarte were all men of dignity and ability, who each filled a short term without dishonor. The last named was a man of fine personal appearance, and soldierly manners. The following characteristic incident occurred while he was governor. An indignation meeting was held at Colon, to protest against the prevalence of unpunished crime, especially of murder. Governor Olarte was invited to attend and accepted the invitation. He listened in dignified silence



[*Panama*

to the discussion, at the end of which he asked politely:

“Gentlemen, have you all finished?”

As there was no response he continued:

“I have listened attentively to all that you have been pleased to say, and my reply is, that if you are not suited with this country, the doors of emigration are always wide open. Good morning!”

That settled it; and the aliens who formed the larger part of the meeting did not soon forget the lesson.

General Olarte died suddenly not long afterwards; and there was a romantic story, lacking confirmation, although generally accepted as true, that he had fallen a victim to poison placed in a glass of wine by a rival, who committed the silly error of partaking of the same cup and thus sharing the same fate.

The names of Correoso, Miro, Pablo Arosemena, Aizpuru, Casorla, Damaso Cervera, Vives Leon, Manuel Amador Guerrero, Posada, and Aycardi are all pleasantly recalled.

Ricardo Arango, thirty-fourth on the list, who filled the office for more than five years, until the date of his death, October 8, 1898, was doubtless one of the best chief executives Panama ever had.

Facundo Mutis-Duran, who was appointed

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governor on the day following the death of Governor Arango, was succeeded by General Campo Serrano, in January, 1900, followed by Governor Carlos Alban, who was killed on board the steamship *Lautaro* in Panama Bay. Don José Domingo de Obaldia was governor at the date of the independence of Panama, November 3, 1903.

The entire list filled the executive chair with dignity, although in earlier years with that plentiful lack of tenure which has been so noticeable in Spanish America.

It is easy to criticise, but when the difficulties which beset a Spanish-American Government are taken into consideration, it will be seen that it is a case of "put yourself in his place."

Isthmian commerce, during the period under review, may be described as the eddy of the stream that flows with considerable constancy along the railroad transit. Were it not for this larger volume, there would not have been sufficient Isthmian trade to deserve the name of commerce. In the twenty-four years from 1876 to 1899 inclusive, 5,330,959 tons of merchandise of all classes were transported over the Panama road, or an average of 222,123 tons per annum. The largest tonnage of any year was in 1888, when 365,266 tons were reported. A considerable percentage of this was material and supplies

for the French Panama Canal. The smallest tonnage was in 1876, when the amount was only 113,781 tons. Since that year there has been a gradual increase.

As in so many other instances relating to Isthmian affairs, statistics are wanting to show the value of local imports and exports. Nor is it considered necessary or important, in this connection, to go into the matter to any extent.

The state of exchange has contributed much to bring about depression of trade conditions. The currency of the Isthmus is silver; and when a merchant is compelled to sell his goods for money that is worth less than one half that with which they were purchased, or in other words, when he must pay more (sometimes much more) than 100 per cent premium for gold, or for exchange with which to make his remittances, it will be seen how difficult it is to get on. It may be said that all the merchant need do is to double his prices, or add as much as he likes to the cost of his goods, to cover this enormous charge; but experience shows that customers are wont to fall off in a dissolving view when their money goes so little way. A silver basis, so long as it is not universal, is alike ruinous to the interests of the public and the individual.

The Chinese, those busy ants of commerce,

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have taken advantage of this state of things, and almost monopolized certain branches of business. They have come to the Isthmus in large numbers, and are now seen on almost every street corner of Colon and Panama, as well as at every station along the railroad. They are a quiet lot, frugal in the extreme, always attend strictly to business, and are rapidly acquiring control of the Isthmian trade in provisions and liquors. They can live where other races would starve. They have many virtues, I suppose, as well as many defects, viewed from our standpoint; but while they have been declared an undesirable element in the population of the United States, it may be doubted whether they will prove so at Panama. Their exclusiveness is certainly a great drawback. They come as aliens, and aliens they remain. But if their pig-tails could be cut off, and the backward sailing rendered impossible—if they, in short, could be induced to consider their residence permanent, as emigrants of other races do wherever they go, there is probability that they might prove a blessing to tropical America, so sadly in need of population.

Although business on the Isthmus has been depressed for the last few years, there is no reason why there should not be an immediate revival in view of recent events.

During earlier canal times several business houses had the reputation of making large fortunes, and it was perhaps true of three or four or half a dozen. As a rule, however, money easily and quickly made, was as quickly and easily spent.

A good story is told of one large concern, consisting of three partners, all of whom were young men of more than ordinary business ability. At the beginning all went well; but too great liberality in the matter of champagne, supplemented, perhaps, by too frequent indulgence in "the work of dealing kings," and things of that sort, kept the contents of the cash box low; and when foreign bills fell due they were not promptly paid. Finally an unreasonable creditor or two became urgent, and replies were sent off, saying:

DEAR SIRs:

"We have received your highly esteemed favor of blank date, and appreciate the force of your remarks. It is true that we owe the amount specified, and we would dearly like to pay the same at once; but we beg to inform you that at the present moment we are not able to buy exchange.

"We regret this, but it cannot be helped.

"We remain, dear sirs,

"Yours sincerely."

## *Chapter XVIII]*

It was considered a good joke, that they simply forgot to add, in regard to exchange, "because we cannot pay for it."

At an earlier date, a Panama merchant (now dead) who became a prominent banker, accumulated a fortune, and lived much in Paris, met with the following piece of good luck.

It often happened that whaling vessels came to Panama to ship their catch home. The captain of one of them brought two casks of whale's teeth, for which he vainly sought a purchaser. At last the aforesaid merchant, just beginning business, offered \$200 for the lot, and the offer was accepted. Then the question arose: What to do with them? Price-lists were scanned, and some one asked: "Why not send 'em to China?" Why not, sure enough? And so they were shipped off via San Francisco, to a commission house in Hong Kong, with instructions to sell, and return proceeds in Chinese straw slippers.

Months passed, and the whale's teeth had been well-nigh forgotten, when one day a letter came enclosing bill of lading and invoice for 100 dozen pairs of slippers, with the following explanation.

The shipment had been received and sold for 1,200 Mexican dollars, and the amount placed to the credit of the Panama merchant. As it was thought best not to invest so large a sum all at

once in the manner requested, the cost of slippers being only ten cents a pair, 100 dozen had been shipped, and a balance, after deducting commissions, etc., of more than \$1,000 remained.

At Panama the slippers readily fetched from a dollar to a dollar and a half per pair; so that before the transaction was closed it had become the parent of a prosperous business in Chinese goods, and the beginning of a handsome fortune.

There was also in former days a brisk business in linen lawns and similar goods, and one prominent merchant held the following unique views on the subject of cash and credit. Commissioned to buy some linen articles, I found upon inquiry that the prices for ready cash were higher than for credit. "Why is this?" I asked in my innocence. "Well," replied the merchant, "if I sell on credit, and the bill is not paid, don't you see I do not lose so much. And another thing, I must get enough from my cash customers to make up for such losses."

The exports from the Republic are much less in value than the imports, so that the balance of trade, though small, is always adverse. Here again statistics are difficult to obtain; but it is safe to say that the value of imported goods exceeds that of exported produce in the proportion of ten to one. The principal item of exports has

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been bananas, a glance at the growth of which trade may be interesting.

About thirty years ago, Mr. C. A. Frank, who was employed on one of the New York steamers, took a few bunches home as an experiment. He disposed of them readily, and the little venture was repeated. It was not long before he left the steamship service, and arranged to remain at Colon, and make regular shipments by each steamer. The planting of more extensive fields was at once encouraged, the Frank Brothers Company was duly organized, and in a few years the trade grew to about its present proportions.

Mr. Frank remained seventeen years in the business, when he retired with a fortune. I heard him say that at the end of ten years of hard work, (owing to occasional losses,—as there was no insurance to be obtained—combined with various vicissitudes and disasters, including high rates of freight, and inadequate and always uncertain accommodations on board the steamers for his fruit, as though it were a matter of little consequence), he found that he had not made a dollar.

At that time the late Mr. Trenor W. Park was president of the railroad, and Mr. Frank appealed to him. It was not in vain, for immediate changes were made, in accordance with the



views of Mr. Frank, and during the following seven years the business prospered.

The Frank Brothers were succeeded by the Aspinwall Fruit Company, of which Mr. J. H. Stilson is agent at Colon. I am indebted to the courtesy of the latter for the memorandum of shipments since 1888 given in the Appendix.

During the last twenty-five years there has been a quite phenomenal development of the banana trade at Bocas del Toro, on the famous Chiriqui Lagoon, in the Republic of Panama, to the westward of Colon. Production has rapidly increased until the present time, when shipments from that port are larger than from any other in the trade. Planting on a large scale is constantly going on; both because bananas quickly exhaust the soil, and because new plantations have become necessary to supply the increasing demand for the fruit. It is claimed that the country within easy reach of the Lagoon is "the finest in the world," and that there is an inexhaustible supply of virgin lands for banana growing, or for any other purpose in the wide range of tropical agriculture. There would therefore appear to be no limit to the prosperity in store for that favored region.

The population of Bocas del Toro and the surrounding settlements was about 1,000 fifteen

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years ago. It is now stated to be 10,000. This growth is to be credited entirely to bananas.

There does not appear to be any limit to the demand for this fruit. The market is gradually widening, and already includes England and continental Europe, as well as the United States and Canada. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the area of production will be largely extended. All of the Atlantic coast line of tropical America that is within marketable reach of the north temperate zone will witness a very large increase in banana culture. The banana habit has become fixed; and it is a good habit; for there is no food product among fruits that is more wholesome or attractive to the palate. It is likely that besides the immense consumption of the raw fruit, a large demand will be developed for the prepared food, either evaporated after the manner of apples, or converted into banana flour or meal. There is no doubt that the future food supply of the world will be permanently augmented by this important item of the list, and that the American tropics, especially the Isthmian coast, will reap a corresponding benefit.

Next in importance has been the exportation of woods and timber. An exceedingly hard and beautiful wood, called coco-bolo, found along the Panama railroad and the Chagres River, has

[*Panama*

been exported in considerable quantities, to be used in fine cabinet work, for knife handles, etc., etc.; also fustic wood for coloring purposes. The most extensive interest in this line, however, has been the cutting and shipping of cedar logs. The trees are found along the Chagres and on the Pacific coast.

From 1860 to 1870 pearls and pearl shells from the fisheries in Panama Bay figured to a considerable extent; but the oyster beds were overworked, and gave out, so that the shipments almost entirely ceased.

India rubber was obtained from the Darien and other parts of the Isthmus; but the trees were cut down, instead of being properly tapped, and thus that industry also was nearly ruined.

Rubber trees have been planted to a limited extent, and it is possible that in a few years the industry will become important.

Ivory nuts, a species of palm nuts, used largely in the manufacture of buttons, are another article of export. They grow all along both coasts of Panama, and are gathered and brought in by the natives, whenever there happens to be a market for them; but the demand is so capricious that they are regarded dangerous to deal in. Cocoanuts are far more marketable. Of the latter, from the San Blas Indians alone,

## *Chapter XVIII]*

several millions are obtained annually. Hides and turtle shell are shipped in small quantities.

The mineral wealth of the Republic has never been developed. Gold is known to abound. Small quantities of gold dust are collected from the streams, by native women for the most part, and sold to merchants at Panama and Colon. Several mines have been worked, but in such a manner as to produce poor results. The Cana gold mine, in the Province of Darien, however, is an exception, if reports are true. It was worked in the time of the Spanish occupation, and has lately been reopened, with flattering prospects. The ore is said to be exceedingly rich, and the output of bullion large.

Coal has been discovered near the line of the Panama Railroad, of a quality that bids fair to pay well, in case the quantity should prove abundant. Manganese has been mined with success at Viento Frio, on Cape Nombre de Dios, a few miles to the eastward of Porto Bello. The ore was found a short distance inland, on or near the surface of the ground, in large boulders of an exceptional percentage of richness. Many thousand tons have been shipped from there to the United States.

As for agriculture—that foundation of all wealth, and of all national prosperity—as the

term is understood at the north and in Europe, there is none. Neither the manner of doing it, nor the extent to which it is done deserves the name. Of the large area comprised by the republic—not less than 30,000 square miles—so little is under cultivation of any sort, that I should say 100 square miles would cover it. This would not include grazing lands, which in some parts are extensive, but cannot be called cultivated. There are no large estates for the growing of any kind of produce, such as sugar, coffee, cacao, or any of the numerous tropical fruits—not even bananas, as they are grown almost entirely by small planters, who will rarely have more than ten acres each in cultivation.

After the French canal failure, a number of the laborers employed, mostly Jamaicans, preferring to remain, took up small bits of land near the line of the railroad, which they have cultivated after a fashion, thus contributing in a measure to the general welfare. They have certainly changed the appearance of the country through which the railroad passes; for now one may, from the train, form some idea of the lay of the land; while in former days the jungle shut in the track,—or shut out the adjacent country—as effectively as if the rails had been laid between two parallel walls.

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The reasons for this lack of agricultural development need not be difficult to find. They are many; but the one which seems most potent to my own understanding is this:

THE TIME HAS NOT YET COME!

## CHAPTER XIX

**T**HE Department of State at Washington has placed me under obligations for lists that will be found in the Appendix, of United States ministers to Bogota, and consuls at Colon and Panama, with the dates of their commissions.

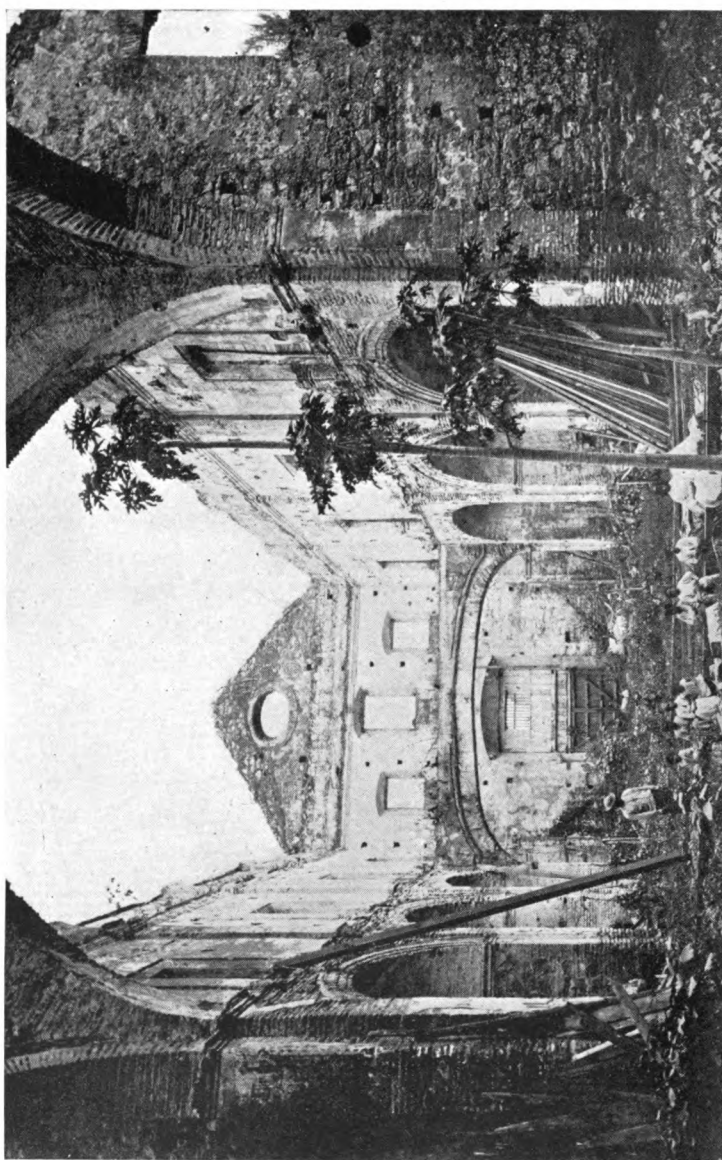
The list of ministers embraces several well-known names. General George W. Jones of Iowa was one of the most prominent citizens of the republic. He served his country in many positions of importance, lived to a great age, and has only recently been gathered to his fathers.

Judge Allen A. Burton of Kentucky was another highly esteemed American who left the impress of his abilities and personal worth upon the people of Colombia, during his long term as minister.

General Sullivan was a genial Irishman, with the reputation of an excellent lawyer. In private intercourse he was delightful; but as he did not understand the Spanish language, it is feared that his wit was lost on the good people of the







RUINS OF SANTO DOMINGO CHURCH (WITH FLAT ARCH), PANAMA, 300 YEARS OLD.

## *Chapter XIX]*

Colombian capital. He complained of the social isolation in which he found himself there.

General Stephen A. Hurlbut was especially commissioned as Minister to Bogota by President Grant, in 1869, to negotiate a canal treaty, and succeeded in doing so. The treaty was signed at Bogota on January 26, 1870, and was transmitted to Washington, where, on March 31st, it was sent by General Grant to the Senate. But it was not ratified.

The question will be asked, Why was it not ratified and its provisions carried out? Why did the whole grand scheme end in humiliating failure and disappointment?

I was indebted for the answer to one of the framers of the treaty, the late Dr. Justo Arosemena. According to information thus derived at first hand, no sooner had the treaty been submitted to the Colombian Congress for deliberation and approval than the enemies of the measure attacked it with great bitterness. The discussions extended through many sessions, and the opposition succeeded at length in making so great changes in the conditions of the treaty—so important amendments and alterations,—that when at last it left their hands it was so far mutilated and wrecked that FAILURE was written large across its face. The treaty had been killed,

and the completion of an interoceanic canal long delayed.

And that was the unfortunate ending of a great plan generously conceived by General Grant, one of the world's acknowledged leaders of men, in peace as in war.

And yet it was not the ending. It was only the end of the first chapter. For the Man of Iron did not see fit to acknowledge defeat. He was undoubtedly angry, but he displayed his displeasure only by turning his attention in another direction. It was then—*and not before*—that the Nicaragua idea came into prominence. Admiral Ammen, a warm personal friend of the President, and Mr. Menocal, were then first sent to see what could be done with the San Juan River and its parent lake. If Colombia would not listen to reason, but would insist upon throwing away an opportunity so splendid, it could not be helped, but she should be taught that a mistake of that magnitude must be paid for. There can be no doubt that had the treaty of 1870 been ratified and put in force, there would to-day be a canal connecting the two oceans. No doubt has ever existed in the minds of men well informed that the Panama route is the best, if not the only one, that comes within the range of practicability. All the rhetoric displayed in the American Con-

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gress and elsewhere, in favor of the Nicaragua route, is based upon a misconception of the natural advantages and disadvantages of the two localities. General Grant knew that the Panama line was the more favorable, as his action clearly showed. Nicaragua was adopted by him in a spirit of pique and resentment. A laudable ambition had been thwarted, and to a mind so determined it was perhaps only natural to turn to what was regarded as the next best expedient. As all the world knows, he was a man of action whose aim was to accomplish whatever had been undertaken. Fame whispered that new laurels waited upon the completion of a waterway from ocean to ocean. And if on the one hand, with pardonable impatience, he turned to the inferior route, on the other, Colombian statesmen were shortsighted, or perhaps influenced by unfriendly councils. It is somewhat remarkable that they should have repeated their stupid action in 1903, thus losing Panama and their last chance of ever having a canal.

Unreasoning opposition at Bogota in both instances, 1870 and 1903, wrought not alone the ruin of both treaties, but in each case brought about an unfortunate estrangement between the two governments; for between the date of the recall of Mr. Scruggs, who followed General

Hurlbut as minister, in 1873, and the appointment of Mr. Dichman in 1878, there was a considerable interval, during which the United States Government was not represented at Bogota.

During this interval, while General Grant was nursing a just resentment, Colombia turned to the French, with the disastrous results so well known throughout the world. The concession granted to Lieutenant Lucien N. B. Wyse is dated March 20, 1878, before United States Minister Dichman had been appointed. Nor was the Government of the United States fortunate in the selection of that gentleman as its diplomatic representative, at a time when, if ever, diplomacy between the two nations was needed. If the reports of his want of tact and lack of politeness were true, he should never have been sent out. The impression he made was not a favorable one.

The return of Mr. Scruggs, in 1882, was sincerely welcomed; as he was an able and charming man, held in high public as well as personal esteem. During his second term, on July 7, 1884, the Bogota mission was raised from that of Minister Resident to Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

In 1889 Hon. John T. Abbott, of New Hampshire, was appointed to succeed General

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Dabney Maury of Virginia. Of the entire list, good, bad, and indifferent, Mr. Abbott was one of the best—perhaps the best. He made himself master of the language of the country, entered fully into the life and customs of the people, and became so universally respected, that when the Methodist ministry was bereft, by President Cleveland, of a bright and shining light, to fill Mr. Abbott's place, general regret was expressed. But the best man stands no better than the worst in American so-called diplomacy.

The honored name of William Nelson heads the list of United States consuls at Panama, his commission being dated July 16, 1845.

Colonel Alexander R. McKee was the first to come within the limits of my time. He was a Kentuckian, and although afflicted with the deplorable infirmity of deafness, which rendered general intercourse rather difficult, and no doubt interfered with his own enjoyment, as well as with that of his associates, he was dearly esteemed for his kindly qualities.

Dr. O. M. Long, the army surgeon and personal friend of General Grant, was also regarded with much public and personal favor during his ten years' tenure of the consulship. His son-in-law, Captain Crooker, who was vice-consul, was also well liked.

Although the name of Hon. William L. Scruggs appears in the list, he did not accept the position, which was given, a month later, to Thomas Adamson, the most efficient consular officer the Panama Isthmus has ever known. He had been consul or consul-general of the United States, at Pernambuco, at Rio Janiero, at Melbourne, and at Honolulu, before he came to Panama, his original commission dating back to President Lincoln's time, or more than thirty years. He remained at Panama, first as consul, and from August 1, 1883, as consul-general, until June 30, 1893, in all over eleven years; and his removal, for no fault, at the beginning of President Cleveland's second term, was universally regretted. The event emphasized the defective consular system of the United States, at that period, from which the degrading idea of "spoils" had not yet been eliminated.

Colon has not been free from the same curse. Fitness has not been regarded. But as I have had the honor to serve (often in charge) as vice-consul, at intervals since 1863, perhaps the less said the better.

There was a public office called by courtesy Special Inspectorship of United States Customs on the Isthmus of Panama, that has only recently been discontinued. It was created soon after the

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completion of the Panama Railroad in 1855, at the solicitation of friends of Mr. Ran Runnels, a Texan, who had been at the head of a company of "Regulators" during the unsafe period of Isthmian transit by river and mule road. His services had been valuable at a time when nerve to hang an outlaw to the nearest tree, without judge or jury, was regarded a virtue. He had been a Texan Ranger, and was familiar with such methods. I did not know Mr. Runnels, but heard a great deal about him after my arrival in 1861. He had just left for Central America, where he died, a few years ago. He was represented to be a delicate, quiet little man, "like a woman," and had many devoted friends.

It was not supposed that the United States Treasury would continue an office, known to be a sinecure pure and simple, after the person for whom it had been created should "die or leave the Bay," as the phrase went. But strange to say, *two* places were substituted for the original one; and for forty years the United States Government paid \$5,000 per annum, without obtaining value received. Nothing was ever done by these "Inspectors" to earn the salaries paid them. There was not even a pretense of service on their part. They drew their pay from the



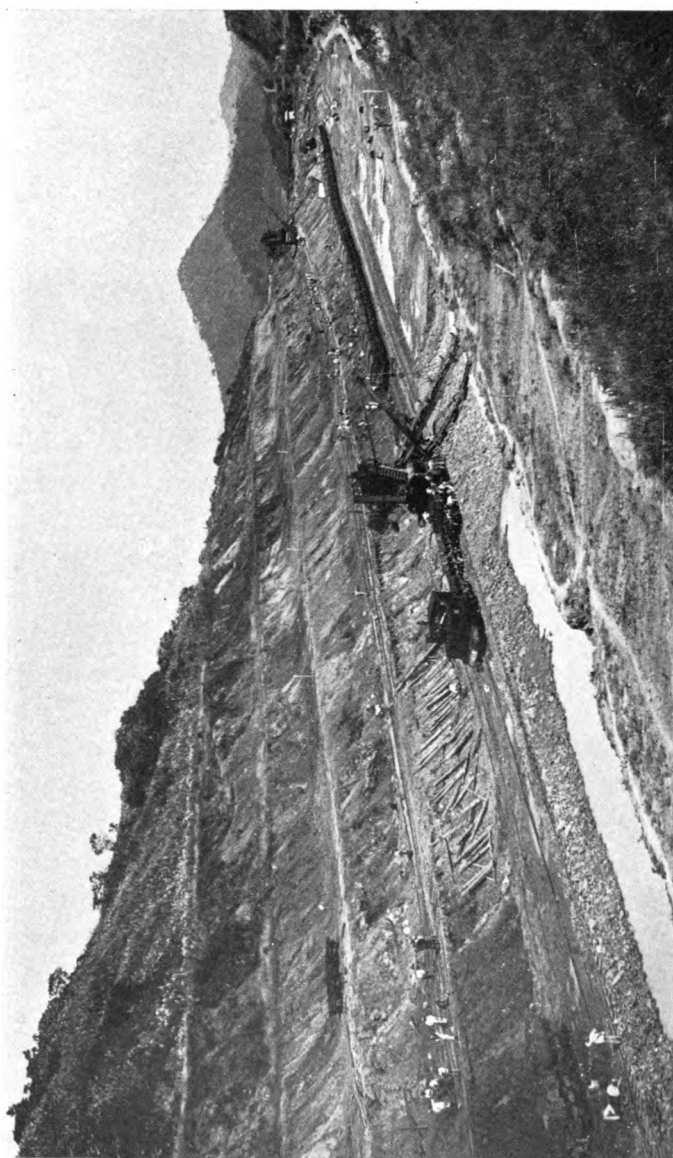
United States Treasury with unblushing regularity—and that was all.

A list of British diplomatic and consular officers, with which I have been kindly furnished by Consul (now Minister) Claude Mallet of Panama, will also be found in the Appendix.

The last three names in the list are those of young men who grew up on the Panama Isthmus. Brilliant talents and charming personal qualities have advanced them in the diplomatic or consular service of their country. From youth they had the consular career before them, and are consequently now well-trained public servants.

How different from the wretched no-system of the United States!

Mr. Charles Toll Bidwell, who was British vice-consul at Panama under Consul Charles Henderson, 1860–68, published a very interesting book, in 1865, called “The Isthmus of Panama.”



CULEBRA CUT, AS LEFT BY THE FRENCH.



## CHAPTER XX

**B**ESIDES the notable people of whom mention has already been made in these pages, there have been many others, especially in earlier days, before the tide of travel was turned away, who were well pleased to "stay their haste and make delays" for brief intervals when crossing the Isthmus.

Among these were the Tichborne Claimant and "Lady Tichborne," who came to Panama from Australia by one of the boats of the Panama and Sydney line, and remained long enough to borrow some money (that has never been repaid) from a friend of mine who was hypnotized by the glamour of the claimant's splendid pretensions. They were on their way to England to begin the contest that became so celebrated. He nor she was in the least aristocratic, if by that word refinement is implied. Grave doubts were entertained and expressed, even then, in quiet old Panama, as to the legitimacy of "Sir Roger's" claims.

Another chance visitor was Mr. Sam Ward,

who had been on an important mission to Nicaragua, and came to Colon on his way to New York. He passed an evening at my home, and left a perpetual remembrance of his surpassing personal charm. At that time he was perhaps fifty, rather short and stout, his grizzled hair and mustache close cut; his expression one of great good nature and perfect health, accompanied by an endless flow of most interesting talk. It was little wonder that he became "King of the Lobby" at Washington, and was held in so high and wide esteem.

The tragedian, Edwin Forrest, was another notable visitor. He was on his way to California, and made himself known to a few resident Americans, to whom he came down from the lofty heights of tragedy, and was for the time mortal like the rest. He was already no longer young, and showed the marks of the passions he had torn to tatters on and off the stage.

An actress who had won much applause in San Francisco as *Mazeppa*, for which character she was splendidly endowed—the Menken (Adah Isaacs Heenan Menken) was also for a few days a guest of the Howard House, Colon, on her way to Paris, where she died. She possessed literary ability also. One remarkable poem called "Into the Depths," that began with the words, "Lost,

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lost, lost!" attracted wide attention. At the time of which I write she appeared to be "flush with doubloons, coins of eight," acquired in her recent triumphs; but it was said that the poor splendid woman came to utter grief in the gay French capital. Photographs were in circulation, in which she appeared with the elder Dumas, but the implied connection was denied. Her grave is (or was) in the Jewish corner of Père La Chaise, for it seemed she was a member of that ancient race.

She smoked cigarettes a good deal, and a trick she had of lighting matches on the sole of her shoe is remembered. She said she had lived much "without the pale of respectability." It was evident.

Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands also came to Colon, and afforded no end of merriment to the black mob. When it became known that a "dusky Queen" was due by the Panama train, a great crowd collected; and when Superintendent Parker gave his arm to her Majesty, to conduct her on board the English steamer by which she went to pay a visit to her sister queen, Victoria, a vast black procession was in attendance.

She was a rather bleached pleasant little cat-eyed descendant of a "King of the Cannibal Is-

lands," apparently inclined to roly-poly and good nature.

A great queen of another sort, the divine Sarah Bernhardt, came to Panama on her swing around the continent of South America, where she gave a few exhibitions of her wondrous art. In her suite was a small menagerie of parrots, monkeys, tiger cats, snakes, and other suspicious characters, which materially assisted her divinity in making things lively for those about her.

Mr. Edward Whymper, the celebrated mountain climber, president of the Alpine Club, etc., on his way to the summit of Chimborazo, was detained at Colon during a norther, and entertained his friends with his exploits. "A Tramp Abroad" had been but recently published, containing Mr. Whymper's account of the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865, when Francis, Lord Douglas, and three others lost their lives. He added other data in relation to that "most memorable of Alpine catastrophes," which made his hearers wonder at the hardihood that can prompt such daring.

Mr. Whymper was not of heroic mold, but on the contrary rather undersized and delicate. On his return from Ecuador he told of having left the blood-red flag of Britain flying on the summit of Chimborazo, "by right of discovery," he

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said, to mark the spot amid the eternal snows  
“where no man hath trod” save himself.\*

He was an engraver, and declared that the excellence of American graphic art, as displayed in our magazines and elsewhere, was the envy and despair of British artists. His two visits were at the end of 1879 and beginning of 1880.

Earlier, General E. D. Keyes came via the island of St. Thomas, *en route* for San Francisco, and remained in Colon “for a day and a night and a morrow.” He had been one of McClellan’s generals in the Peninsula, and was fresh from the disaster of Malvern Hill and the retreat that followed: events that had cast deep gloom over the North. He was a close personal friend and warm military partisan of General McClellan. As there had been brought about a very pleasant short acquaintance between the latter and myself, before the war, when he was chief engineer of the Illinois Central Road, I took the deepest interest in the views of General Keyes in regard to the failure of the Peninsular campaign, and its effect upon the military fortunes of his chief, as well as upon the final results of the war. He appeared to be in distress and deep

\* The Ecuadorian authorities said Mr. Whympers must go and take the English flag down from the top of Chimborazo, but he told them to take it down themselves.



despondency; and I was so much influenced by the somber nature of his talk that the cause of the North looked desperate indeed. He did not reënter the military service, but retired to California, where he possessed a large estate. He was a man of refined appearance, soldierly and somewhat austere, although charming in private intercourse.

Of an entirely different sort was bluff and hearty old Captain Bedford Pim, R.N. (retired), a frequent visitor to the Isthmus in former days. He had become interested in a railway scheme from Monkey Point, on the Mosquito coast, between Greytown and Blewfields, to Lake Nicaragua. The route led across the wild Chontales Mountains, and the gradients were impossible.

The first time I saw him was at Colon on board the Royal Mail steamer *Shannon*, on his way to Managua. The late Mr. Thomas Harrison, Crown Surveyor of Jamaica, took me with him to pay Captain Pim a visit. That son of Neptune received us with good-natured condescension, and plunged at once, neck and heels, into his pet project. I do not remember to have seen a more elaborate and gorgeous display of maps plans and profiles than was brought out and unrolled before our wondering eyes. The spacious

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saloon of the *Shannon* was none too large to hold it. It was a spectacle, a panorama. If we had not known better, it would have appeared that Monkey Point, rechristened Bahia de Pim, or Pim's Bay, was already, or would soon be in communication by rail with the Nicaraguan capital; so perfect were all the details—on paper. And then to hear the gallant captain talk! He was so sanguine, and the thing seemed so real to his mind, and so easy, that a single breath of doubt from his listeners would have been blown back in a fine breeze of scorn. As an exhibition of optimism, built on a foundation less stable than sand, it could not have been equaled. There was nothing in it. For years the ancient mariner, in the character of promoter, went and came, full of his great scheme, forever reading papers, trying to attract capital, and going off like a geyser.

Schuyler Colfax, when he was Vice-President of the United States, visited the Isthmus on his way from San Francisco to New York. He has been called by those who did not hold him in high esteem, Smiler Colfax; and indeed he was seldom without a smile on his handsome face. He was at one time regarded as a powerful factor in American political life; but the investigations by Congress of the affairs of the Credit

Mobilier, in connection with the building of the Pacific overland railways, was fatal to his fame. He had been talked of as a candidate for President of the United States.

Governor Bigler of California, and United States Senator Nye of Nevada, were also among the prominent public men, of more than ordinary ability and interest, who charmed the Isthmian air with their temporary presence. Both were characteristic Westerners, men of intelligence and action of the rough-and-ready order.

One fine day, about the year 1863 or 1864, on the arrival of the Panama train, a gentleman brought a note of introduction and a very beautiful young wife to my office, requesting that she be permitted to remain there while he attended to their baggage, steamer tickets for New York, and so forth. Of course nothing could have afforded me greater pleasure. The husband's absence, however, seemed to be prolonged to an unreasonable length; and when at last he came back, all flustered and apologetic, with a strong suspicion of having "met a friend or two," the lovely woman used her eloquent eyes in place of words, in a manner to command instant silence. I do not think she uttered a syllable; but it was the most complete rebuke I have ever witnessed.

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This was Ephraim George Squier, archæologist and author, on his way from Peru, where he had been collecting materials for his important work on the antiquities of that highly interesting country. He had previously written several books that were widely read in their day; among them "The States of Central America," 1858. This book, of which I possess a copy, is still considered, next to the two volumes of John L. Stephens, the most valuable work that has been published on the subject. He died in Brooklyn, in 1888. His beautiful wife afterwards became Mrs. Frank Leslie.

The late Fred Hassaurek, United States Minister to Ecuador from 1861 to 1865, and author of the absorbing narrative, "Four Years in Spanish America," came frequently to the Isthmus during that time. He was a genial man, of delicate constitution and refined tastes, whom it was a pleasure and an honor to know. His home was at Cincinnati, where before and after his term as Minister to Quito, he was owner and editor of an influential German-American newspaper. No better account than his has been published, since that of the Ulloas (Don Jorge Juan and Don Antonio, in 1735), of the dreadful journey between Guayaquil and Quito, nor of the life and habits of the people of that equatorial

republic. He also wrote a thrilling novel, which had for its theme the mournful destiny of the Incas of Peru. His early death was deplored by a wide circle of friends.

William Henry Hurlbut, brother of General Stephen A. Hurlbut, was another brilliant man who once paid Colon a visit. He was then chief editor of the New York *World*, and had been on a journey to Peru, by invitation of Mr. Monte-Cristo Meiggs, when that millionaire was contractor for railroads that cost a \$100,000,000.

I took Mr. Hurlbut for a morning drive around Manzanillo Island, behind Tom and Dick, the prettiest pair of ponies in the world; and it is a pleasure to recall the keen enjoyment he manifested as we flew along the sea-beach road, in the balmy air, the breakers on one hand, and the deep-green palm-jungle on the other. As I remember him, he was a handsome man, full of hearty, healthy, robust life, fascinating, kindly, a perfect citizen of the world, and master of a wealth of various information.

The humorist, Artemus Ward (Charles Farrar Browne), also came this way, as one of the "ships that pass in the night." When I saw him, probably in 1866, he was a very pale, blonde, rather tall man, beardless, except a long,

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drooping red mustache. He had a prominent nose, and the stoop of a victim to consumption in his shoulders. He was on his way at the time to England where, according to E. C. Stedman, "he was able to lecture for a few months, repeating his American successes. Increasing illness prevented his return to the United States." He died at Southampton, March 6, 1867, at the age of thirty-three.

Another Mr. Browne, John Ross, a prolific writer for *Harper's Magazine*, who published some delightful books which were widely read thirty or forty years ago, was appointed United States Minister to China, and came around with his family to Panama, from New York, as guest of the Pacific Mail Company, in one of their big new steamers—the *Japan*, I think—on his way to his post via San Francisco. During the few days' stay of the ship in Panama Bay, I had the pleasure of calling on Mr. Browne on board, and of making the acquaintance of himself, his amiable wife, and his accomplished daughters.

It is one of the conditions of literary fame that it is not often durable. In his time J. Ross Browne had a great audience. His productions were as eagerly read as were those of Bret Harte or of Mark Twain a little later, or those of our best contemporary writers. He had a fine wit,

and though at times his humor was somewhat broad, it was thoroughly genial and delightful. The papers called "The Coast Rangers," published in *Harper's Monthly*, in 1861-62, giving an account of the poor degraded Digger Indians, and the shameful manner in which the United States Government had treated them, were especially droll. The contractors, he said, had emptied the drugstores at the East of their miscellaneous contents in the shape of stale, unsaleable goods of all sorts, that could be bought for a mere song, and had sent the same out for the poor Diggers. "An ounce of croton oil," he goes on, "would go a great way in lubricating the intestines of an entire tribe; and as for paint, if it could not be strictly classed with any medicines known in the Official Dispensary, it might at least be used for purposes of clothing during the summer months. Red or green pantaloons painted on the legs of the Indians, and striped blue shirts artistically marked out on their bodies, would be at once cool, economical, and picturesque."

In former days (not so much now) the expression Nature's nobleman was often heard; or as Carlyle would have written, Noble-Man. Answering to that description was Prof. Louis Agassiz, of world-wide fame. It was my good

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fortune to be presented to him by Mr. William Parker, Superintendent of the Panama Road, at Colon, about the year 1867. Accompanied by his devoted wife, he arrived at Panama, by the Coast Survey steamer *Albatross*, Captain Z. L. Tanner, U. S. N., which the United States Government had placed at their disposal, for the purpose of making the voyage around South America, in the interests of science. By invitation they came across to Colon, where they made a short stay as guests of the railroad company, after which they returned to their ship and continued the voyage to California.

Professor Agassiz was about sixty at that time. In appearance he was the perfection of health and activity. As I recall him, he was a large florid man, weighing perhaps two hundred pounds, still without the ordinary signs of age in the shape of gray beard or hair. His manner was cordial, and it seemed natural to him to attract and fascinate. Everything interested him; he seemed to walk in a kind of wonder-world, in which all he saw was marvelous. An intense, eager, insatiable, glowing, inspired, noble mind, it was not strange that he possessed the warm friendship of the best men of his time—Lowell, Holmes, Dana, Emerson, Phillips, Whittier, Longfellow, and a host of others; or that the last



[*Panama*

named celebrated his fiftieth birthday in a poem containing these beautiful lines:

And Nature, the old nurse, took  
The child upon her knee,  
Saying: "Here is a story-book  
Thy Father has written for thee."

"Come, wander with me," she said,  
"Into regions yet untrod;  
And read what is still unread  
In the manuscripts of God."

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens), who has contributed more perhaps than any other writer of his time to "the gaiety of nations," arrived at Colon on his way to California, soon after the return of the famous Quaker City excursion. He alone had made it famous, by writing on the voyage the series of letters afterwards published under the title of "The Innocents Abroad."

We had read the letters at Colon, in the San Francisco newspaper *Alta California*, and like everybody else had enjoyed them immensely. When, therefore, it was known that their author was a passenger from New York by the steamer, a natural desire to see him led me to propose to two or three friends to call on him. This was not difficult to do. For a lion of that sudden magni-

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tude we found him democratic and easily approachable. His great mane was tawny then, without a silver thread. He was solemn as a funeral, and in speech as slow. These traits added and I believe have always added to the fun that sparkled in all he said. Among other things he was asked:

“What did you think, Mr. Clemens, on the whole, of your fellow-passengers on board the *Quaker City*?”

With a most serious air, and the original Mark Twain drawl, he replied: “Well, my good friends, I’ll tell you. There weren’t brains enough on board that steamer to start a first-class infant!”

This startling declaration was followed by other details of an amusing nature, which confirmed his small but select audience in the opinion that he was the funniest man on the globe; a reputation that I believe never forsakes him the world over.

In March, 1895, I had a pleasant call from Richard Harding Davis, on his way from Central America, via Panama, to Caracas. He had then recently crossed Honduras from the Atlantic to the Pacific, an interesting account of which journey appeared in *Harper’s Magazine*, under the title of “Three Gringoes in Central Amer-

ica.” Later his graphic descriptions of the Venezuelan capital were published in the same periodical. This gifted and energetic young author, traveler, war correspondent, and cosmopolitan impressed me as a strong man both physically and intellectually.

Space forbids mention of the names of other well-known people whom it has been delightful to meet, during all these fiercely fleeting years. The list would be too long.

It remains, however, to mention Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet, critic, man of letters, man of affairs, man of the world. A year after our first meeting, in the winter of 1874-75, in the mountains of Jamaica, he came for a short visit to Panama, when the friendship formed a twelvemonth before was cemented anew. During his brief stay of ten days, we went by boat, one glorious morning, to see the ruins of Old Panama, where

“So long have the bare gray walls lain guestless,  
Through branches and briers if a man make way,  
He shall find no life save the sea-wind’s, restless  
Night and day.”

We landed at the old seawall, and made *our* way over broken arches to the great ruined roofless tower of San Jéromé, which was then as now

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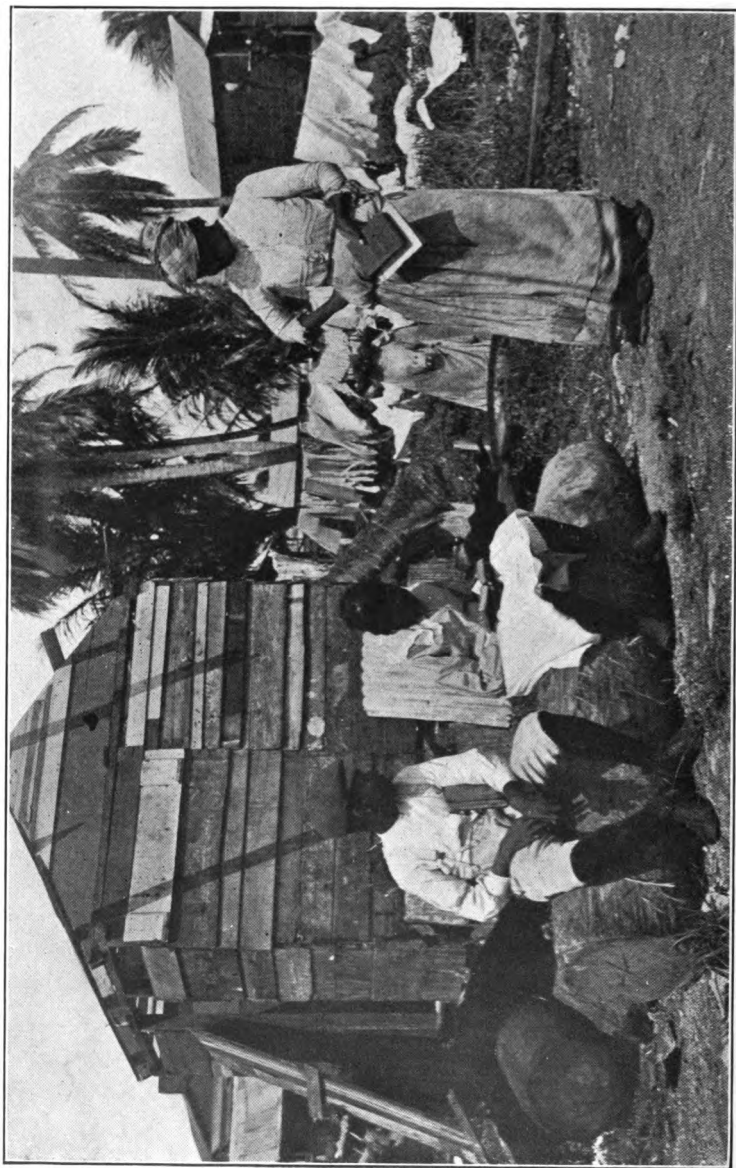
surrounded by dense jungle, and covered to its summit with vines and orchids and wild tropical vegetation. We stood within its walls, and wondered at the ruin time had made since Morgan the Buccaneer captured and sacked the city. Little else remained to mark the spot that had once been the abode of riches and pride and power.

I cannot say what lasting impressions were made upon my friend by the dear comradeship of those few delightful tropic days and nights; but for me, as Charles Dickens wrote, "a crowd of affectionate remembrances clusters about it, that would brighten the darkest winter day that ever glimmered and went out in Lapland."

## CHAPTER XXI

THE Spanish language is spoken, and the Roman Catholic religion prevails in Panama, the entire native population being reckoned as children of the Mother Church. Perhaps no form of religious worship can be better for a new and thinly settled country, where the *padre* or priest is indeed the spiritual father of the people. He is called upon to be guide, counselor, friend and teacher all in one. His task is hard and thankless in many instances, his life one of toil and privation; but observation shows that his high office is filled with zeal, constancy, and devotion. The Isthmian priesthood is native born, with occasional exceptions, among whom was Father Curley, an Irish Catholic priest, who came from New York twenty-five years ago, and organized the Parish of Colon, under the Bishop of Panama. The good man collected funds, built a church, of which he remained in charge several years, and was noted for his energy and benevolence. His departure was much regretted, when, on account of ill health, induced by constant toil





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GOING TO SCHOOL, COLON, 1906.

## *Chapter XXI]*

in a hot climate, he left Colon for Buenos Ayres.

During the Colombian civil war of the early sixties, while General Mosquera was President, radical changes were made in existing conditions, which included the confiscation of church property, and banishment of the religious orders.

Under the presidency of Rafael Nuñez, the church regained, throughout Colombia, a large share of its former prestige, which it yet retains. At the same time it is to be noted that much liberality and freedom of religious opinion have prevailed. For many years there was a Protestant mission at Bogota, under the Rev. Mr. Wallace; and others have been established in various parts of the republic. On the Isthmus, where there has been, since the advent of the railroad, a large Protestant population of foreign-born residents, the greatest freedom exists. The two churches of Colon, one Episcopal, the other Wesleyan, enjoy the widest liberty of expression and action. They confine their labors, as they should, to spiritual and secular ministrations, and to the teaching of their own faith.

The beautiful building, Christ Church, erected on the beach at Colon at a cost of \$75,000 by the Panama Railroad Company assisted by private subscriptions, is a monument alike to the



liberal spirit that prompted, and the tolerance that permitted and encouraged it.

It was built in 1864 by Mr. Weeks, a New York contractor; and was consecrated to the Episcopal service by the late Bishop Alonzo Potter of Pennsylvania, in June, 1865, when that distinguished prelate was on his way from New York to California, as guest of the Pacific Mail Company in one of their new steamers via the Straits of Magellan. During the few days' delay at Panama, the bishop came over to Colon, and performed the ceremony of consecration, in which I had the honor of being one of the sponsors. He returned the following morning to the ship in Panama Bay; and sad to relate, the fatigue and unusual excitements of the Isthmian journey brought on illness which resulted in the good man's death on arrival in the harbor of San Francisco.

The church long remained in the Diocese of New York, but was transferred to that of Honduras, over which Bishop Ormsby of the Church of England presided. Rev. S. P. Hendrick was for many years the zealous rector. His recent departure cannot fail to be deeply regretted. At one time the building was much neglected; and after the great fire of 1885 it was used as a prison and soldiers' barracks.

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Among the earlier rectors were Rev. Messrs. Major, Temple, Bancroft, Tullidge, Knapp, and Henson, with all of whom I had pleasant acquaintance. They were men of exceptional intelligence and kindliness of character, as well as of consistent devotion to their calling, and did all they could to lead in what they thought the right way. Mr. Major was candid enough to say to me that whatever good he could hope to do in such a deadfall would not be apparent in *his* lifetime, and I presume his successors held similar views.

The Wesleyan mission is a credit to that great society. It was established by Rev. Mr. Latham, who with his devoted wife remained in Colon several years. Mr. Latham was succeeded by Mr. Taylor, who preached in a tent, when the weather permitted, and being somewhat sensational, created a good deal of excitement for a time. He became ill, and believed he died and went to heaven (?) and was restored to life. I think it was probably a dream resulting from the delirium of fever.

At Panama efforts have been made at various times, and under different ministers, to keep up Protestant worship. At one period Mr. Hicks, an excellent young man, labored as lay preacher for years, with exemplary zeal; but he said at last that the work of conversion was hopeless.

Rev. Mr. Geddes, the active and energetic Wesleyan minister, lived at Panama, and was in general charge of the mission on the Isthmus. After him came Mr. Clark, Mr. Jacobs, and Mr. Cooke, the present pastor (1907).

The moral tone of the Isthmian community during the years under review was never very high. There has always been a large number of resident Jamaicans and other West Indians, who have been ready enough to attend church; but as one of the ministers said to me: "They are often religious without being moral!" The discrimination is a curious one, and is recommended to the attention of students of such matters. Since the year 1861 there has been a constant if slow elevation.

It is difficult to understand fully, and express an intelligent opinion upon the social life of people of another race and language, other ideas and customs, other standards of action; unless family ties enable one to do so. Others as well as myself, who have lived long among Spanish-Americans, have found them agreeable and polite in their intercourse with each other and with foreigners; always ready to oblige, and willing, in many instances, to sacrifice themselves for the comfort or convenience of others. They are kind and affectionate toward their children, whether

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the offspring of legitimacy, or, as often happens, born of a union that has not had the sanction and blessing of the priest. High or low it is the same. They have the reputation of being exceedingly agreeable in all social relations among themselves. The better class is exclusive, rarely forming intimacies with foreigners, except in cases of intermarriage. Differences of language and of religious faith have doubtless had a great deal to do with this. In recent years many Spanish-American women of the better class have been sent abroad to be educated, and speak English or French or both; yet their modesty is as marked as ever, and upon their return to their homes and to the perpetual indolence of the tropics, they usually fall in with the time-honored *costumbres del país* (customs of the country), are married to native husbands, and lead the native life. Foreigners of the male sex, domiciled among them, often find great charm in their beauty, and in many instances have formed domestic ties which have doubtless resulted happily; but there is reason to doubt if a woman of northern birth and education, married to a Spanish-American, finds her life a dream of bliss. The difference between the picture imagination has painted and the reality, unless one is very optimistic, is too great.

The gulf between the upper and lower strata

of society appears much wider here than at the North. There, everyone is as good as anyone else—if not a little better; while here the time-honored convention, inherited from Spain, still holds that the *hidalgo* (*hijo de algo*, Son of Somebody) is better than his neighbor, Son of Nobody. In Panama there are many families descended from the nobility of Spain. The republic has not yet changed all that. For the rest, I bear cheerful testimony that while one will encounter a good deal of the *mañana* (to-morrow) element in the native character, the Isthmian is an easy person to live with, provided one does not look for too much; since he is good-natured, courteous, not intrusive, and as honest as could be expected.

The foreign colony on the Isthmus, always rather large, owing to the numbers engaged in trade or occupying official positions in the different companies, has been a veritable rope of sand, so far as social life has been concerned: a heterogeneous mob of aliens, here to-day and gone to-morrow, whose ruling passion is to get on. Men in all stations grow cynical, ill-natured, and censorious. The reason is that no one ever came to the Isthmus with the idea of remaining long. It has been a procession rather than a social state, the characteristics of which have often been pe-

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cular, sometimes grotesque and amusing. The beggar-on-horseback idea has prevailed, as it always will prevail when poor human nature gets a brief chance to mount. The briefer, the more absurd is the exhibition of horsemanship.

Cosmopolitanism has been the chief feature of the foreign contingent. It would be difficult to name any country, civilized or otherwise, that has not been represented. This was more especially the case during French canal times, when from

“ Jerusalem and Madagascar,  
And North and South Amerikee,”

all nationalities came flocking like birds of prey.

I would not intimate that there has been, at any time, a complete absence of social enjoyment among foreigners, or that warm friendships have been lacking. It could not be expected that in such transient social conditions the same cordiality would exist as in older and better ordered communities, in which stability is the rule; but all things considered, the general kindliness manifested has been remarkable.

A discussion of the climate will involve the expression of individual opinions contrary to the prevailing impression. I am aware that there has always been a great dread of the place, and have been asked a thousand times: How can you

stay there? In reply I have said, and repeat here, *there are many worse places*. It is not the deadly halfway station between Hope and Hades, Life and Death, that it has been painted. It is true that the whole coast line of tropical America is subject to malarial influences, and more particularly wherever the rainfall is so great as at Colon. Vegetation is rank and decay rapid, so that the atmosphere becomes more or less poisoned by exhalations that are inimical to health. The constant heat is also a cause of debility, independent of all malarial taint in the air. What would be said in New York or London, if the whole year round the temperature averaged 80° in the shade by day, and the nights were not much cooler? Now if the malarial element were added, is it not probable that a Londoner or New Yorker would take a through ticket for the North Pole by the first train?

Yet Colon and Panama are not intolerable. Far from it; for when one becomes accustomed to tropical life, one finds a thousand compensations for the so-called superior advantages of the temperate zones.

It is facetiously said that there are only two seasons on the Panama Isthmus—the rainy and the wet; but this is slander. The dry season, which begins not far from the first of the year,

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and extends to April 17th or thereabouts, is regarded as the more salubrious and enjoyable. The northeast trades then blow almost unceasingly, with occasional showers, and all local causes of disease are supposed to disappear. Under the vertical rays of a torrid sun vegetation then withers. Many of the forest trees are deciduous, and it is at this period that they shed their foliage. This gives a less verdant appearance to the landscape; but as soon as the first heavy rains fall, Nature resumes her robes of rich emerald green, and closes the gaps made by the sun's unclouded fire. The changes from one season to the other are supposed to be prolific of malaria, and therefore very trying to the health.

In the Appendix will be found a statement of the rainfall at Colon for the ten years 1890-99, from which it will be seen that there was an average of 138.05 inches per annum for the whole period. This was certainly sufficient to rejoice the heart of Jupiter Pluvius; and as the heavy rains were accompanied by tremendous thunder and lightning, it may be presumed that Jupiter Tonans had a lively interest in Isthmian affairs also.

Formerly it was observed that there would be a considerable difference in alternate years, the rainfall in one year, for example, being as low as



eighty or ninety inches, while the following year it would be nearly or quite twice as much. That interesting meteorological feature seems, however, to have disappeared, according to more recent data from which I have borrowed.

The diseases of the climate are for the most part fevers of various types, none of which are regarded as dangerous, except yellow fever, which has rarely (in my opinion never) visited the Panama Isthmus, except in sporadic form, during the years under review. The steamers have brought many cases, many also of smallpox; but neither the one nor the other has ever spread so as to become epidemic. No old resident has any fear of them. The Chagres fever affects the liver, and brings on depression and general debility. In a climate without bracing qualities, recovery is often so tardy that a trip away is best. Indeed it is always well, even for those in health to go for a change over seas every two or three years if possible; although I once remained at Colon five years without serious trouble.

To one of healthy constitution and good habits there is no danger on the Panama Isthmus, that is not present in any other tropical country. Cold neglect alone, on the part of those who should have cared for the sanitary condition of

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Colon, has prevented that place from becoming as healthful and desirable a home as may be found in the whole torrid zone. It is surrounded by the sanitary sea; and if the coral island upon which it is built were properly drained and looked after, there is no reason in the world why it should not be a safe and wholesome place of residence. (This was written before Colonel Gorgas came.)

Many foreigners have fallen victims to fear rather than fever; while many others have wrought their own destruction by drink, which is the greatest curse of mankind in all lands, but more especially in hot countries. It has killed, directly and indirectly, more than the entire list of diseases put together; for it induces, by its derangement of the vital forces, every ill to which flesh is heir. Candor compels me to state that I have tried both abstinence and moderate indulgence; and when it is said that strong drink is necessary in the tropics to tone the system up, or for any good purpose under heaven, I say emphatically, it is not so! It is absolutely best to let it entirely alone. My forty-six years' experience gives me authority to write as I do.

The "fire habit" should also be mentioned, as it lends frequent excitement and emotion to Colon life. A round dozen of fires have occurred

since 1861, the most destructive being that of 1885, when, in mining phrase, there was a general clean-up. No adequate provision was ever made from first to last, for the prompt control of these calamities, until very recently.

An occasional norther has added its spectacular grandeur to the Isthmian drama. That of November, 1862, which I have noted elsewhere, will serve as an example. There have been several others of equal or perhaps greater violence and destructive power. These storms come on suddenly, and sometimes last three or four days.

Only one earthquake of considerable importance has occurred—that of September 7, 1882. It came about three o'clock on a calm moonlit night when everybody was asleep. The most violent shock lasted thirty seconds. People were terrified, but no great damage was done. It was ascertained later to have been the distant effect of a severe earthquake in Venezuela at that same moment. Sensational reports were published at the time, and the affair was much exaggerated. When it was over I went back to bed and slept till daylight. Yet it would not be true to say that any of these great convulsions could be felt without fear. Several lighter shocks have visited the Isthmus, but none that caused damage or alarm; and the experience of many years has

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demonstrated that the region is not within the habitual range of these awe-inspiring phenomena.

There are many reasons why Colon is not a dull place to live in. In late years there have been at least 500 steamer arrivals each year; and as the vessels fly the flags of a dozen different countries, bringing and taking away many strange people, as well as much curious merchandise, if one had no other occupation or amusement this could be made an interesting study. Winter, with its bitter cold, its suffering and distress, has never been known; and although some of the refinements of what is called the higher civilization have been wanting, and social and intellectual isolation sometimes felt, yet each flame-tinted dawn has been a revelation and every moonlit or star-gemmed night a heavenly benediction.

## CHAPTER XXII

OUR first home was on the beach, under the palms, within sight and sound of breakers, near the lighthouse. At night from our windows the north star could be seen low down across the Caribbean. This gave us the first and only twinge of homesickness.

The servant question was solved by the employment of Agnes, a young Jamaican—black, jolly, and wholly irresponsible. Her laughing face and pearl-white perfect teeth were her principal attractions. It was the custom for servants to sleep out of the house, an arrangement that gave them greater freedom. This girl like others of her class insisted on living in that manner, and often shocked us with her frank revelations. She regarded the marriage tie as a species of slavery to which she would by no means submit; and we soon learned that her views on the subject were generally accepted and put in practice by women of her race in the tropics. If they do your work they resent interference with their morals. For years this woman proved a faith-





FRONT STREET, COLON, BEFORE THE GREAT FIRE OF 1885.

## *Chapter XXII]*

ful servant so far as could be expected. Her one great virtue was unfailing good-nature, in which respect she was superior, though otherwise a fair example of her class.

The next problem was the food question. Conditions were new to us. At that time and until long after there was no regular market, but supplies for daily use had to be picked up here and there, in shops or at a street corner, where some old black auntie would have a board on an empty barrel from which to sell her scanty and often stale "truck."

Market gardening was unknown, nor was there an adequate supply of other fresh provisions—eggs, milk, fresh meat, fish, fruit, or fowl. This made it necessary to live a whole lot on canned stuff, and to thank Providence for that!

The fruits of the tropics were attractive, but frequently not available. Oranges, bananas, plantains, guavas, pineapples, cocoanuts, papayas, mangoes, alligator pears, bread-fruit, nispero, chirimoya, star-apple, marañon, mamey-sapote, grenadilla, rose-apple, akee, sapucaya, tamarind, lime, and a number of others soon became familiar, but the supply was never abundant. All, or nearly all, are delicious although for the most part not to be compared with our northern fruits.



Small fruits of the berry kind, and all kinds of nuts, are almost entirely wanting in the tropics. The sapucaya is a rare exception. Professor Orton gives a short description of this remarkable production of nature in his "Andes and the Amazon." It is akin to the brazil nut and grows on gigantic trees "with branchless trunks fifty feet high." These very rich edible nuts grow in a large capsule in size and shape like a sugar bowl, which has a natural lid or cover. "The nuts are richer than the brazil nuts of commerce. As they fall when ripe, the lid drops off and the nuts are eaten by monkeys and other wild animals, so that few come to market." This tree is found in the headwaters of the Rio Trinidad that flows into the Chagres.

No fruit is in more constant use than the lime in all hot countries. It is said, however, that its immoderate use tends to impoverish the blood and to reduce the tone of the system generally.

The principal food of the colored people consists of yams, yuca, plantain, and rice. These, cooked with salt fish, furnish the standard "bill of fare." Fresh fish can always be had for the catching, as tropical seas are "full up" of many varieties.

Poultry only needs encouragement to be abun-

## *Chapter XXII]*

dant; yet all these supplies were sporadic, unless they were imported.

Of flowers there were (and are) infinite varieties, but when all is said, the North need not fear the rivalry of the South for floral sweetness and beauty, unless it is in comparison with the orchid family, some specimens of which are truly wonderful. For example, the Isthmian *Espiritu Santo* or Dove-flower, which is one of the most exquisite things in nature. It is found only in the depths of the jungle, as though it hid away!

Of insects and reptiles it goes without saying that there was (and still is) no lack. They are all exceedingly interesting to the naturalist, and frequently, on too close acquaintance, to the non-naturalist also, but it would become tiresome in this place to attempt a detailed catalogue and description. They would fill a volume.

It is well known that the animal kingdom of equatorial America has no species of the heroic kind—no lions, tigers, elephants, or rhinoceri. The wild things are neither very large nor very fierce, nor very plentiful. Some respectable snakes may be found in the Isthmian jungle, and various kinds of monkeys, some deer and tiger-cats and jaguars (small red so-called lions), also sea cows along the coasts; but no “big game.” It is for the most part a lonely land, as noted in

the account of Lieutenant Strain and his bewildered party in a former chapter.

Birds are more numerous than animals. The ornithologist finds many rare kinds, specimens of which have been sent away to supply museums up and down the world, or to adorn private collections. The parrot family—including the gem-like parrakeet and gorgeous, dreadful, military macaw—is very much in evidence. In captivity *too* numerous, perhaps, if peace and quiet are desired. But they often become great pets, and here is a little history of one in the following

#### BIRD'S OBITUARY.

His name was Pretty, and he was about seven years old. He had several other names also, such as Too-too, Little Mannie, Jewel Birdie, and Booly-bump.

He was only a tiny weeny little bit of a parrakeet. When he was first sent to New York, with several others, he was scarcely feathered, and it was doubtful if he would stand the voyage. But he got there all the same, as the saying is, and being so very young and forlorn was taken especial care of by the kindest of hands. He was singled out from the rest and made a particular pet. It was not long before he began to talk a little, and among the first words was

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“Pretty.” From this he was christened, and by it was known to a rather wide circle of friends and acquaintances. After a while he grew to be a perfect jewel in appearance, his color being a sort of golden green, with a small tuft of saffron under his throat, a wealth of gold hidden miserlike beneath his wings, and a shade of sien-na mixed with the lovely deep emerald of his back. When in the sunlight he was indeed like a luminous jewel. Not larger than a canary, it was all the more wonderful how much the little fellow knew. For a long time he did not care for anyone except his dear mistress, who had been so kind to him when he was a poor friendless orphan, far from the sun-land of his birth, where his tribe are called love birds. Of her he became exceedingly fond. The sentiment was mutual. He went with her to Germany, where he spent a long winter, during which he came near going the long journey, from the intense cold; but a doctor was called, and with care and tender nursing he was brought round. Afterwards he came back home. In a year or two he was taken a second time abroad, when he visited nearly all the cities of Europe. Once, at the frontier between Austria and Italy, the aduana bandits made a great fuss about allowing him to pass, and were about to confiscate him. But a heavy duty,

amounting to two thirds of his original cost, was paid for his ransom, and he was allowed to cross the Austrian Tyrol into sunny Italy. As it was August it was sunny for true! The days were hot, but at night in Venice all the world was out of doors, strolling up and down the great Plaza of St. Mark's, or rowing about the canals in gondolas and singing love songs. It was there he got the name of Booly-bump. To tell that story, in a bird's obituary, would perhaps be tiresome, but it was a happy reminiscence to his surviving friends.

All the way along, in railway cars and everywhere, the little fellow was almost always jolly, calling himself over and over "Pretty birdie" and "Pretty, pretty boy," telling people to "Come in!" and enjoying the pleasures of travel, such as they are, as much as anybody. Nothing pleased him more than going from place to place, and seeing as much as a dear little pet birdie could of men and women and things in general.

He passed through northern Italy, in sight of the ever lovely Lake of Garda, to Milan; thence past Como and Lugano, through the famous St. Gothard tunnel, nine dark miles under the Alps, into Switzerland; and thence via Paris and London, back again to New York. He had made

## *Chapter XXII]*

what was once called the grand tour, and appeared well pleased with the journey.

He had been more than once in peril. At the Hotel Continental in Paris, where private meals were served, he was missed one day, after the table-cover had been removed. Search was instantly made, and it is possible that the police would have been notified if he had not been found unharmed, and apparently enjoying the joke, gathered up in the table-cover with the other morsels and taken away by the garçon.

At another time, left for a moment on the seat of a railway coach, he came very near being carried off by the wrong train, but was rescued.

Once he was taken to Jamaica, where for several months he enjoyed the proverbial hospitalities of the island, and then returned to the land of his birth, greatly to his satisfaction. In fact, wherever he went he seemed happy. At this time a little mate was given him, and his love affair so completely occupied his time and attention that an apparent coolness grew up on his part toward the dear mistress who had ever been to him so kind and faithful. As some poet has said he appeared to think, in his simple bird way, that "love is enough." That is to say, he grew selfish and forgot old obligations in the new bliss. This

went on for some time until after the great fire of September, when the cage that contained the pair was among the few things rescued from the mad flames; and all was well, until one day the little Gem, as she was called—his bright little beauty of a mate—was killed by the falling of her cage.

From that hour Pretty was quite changed from his old self; for instead of taking anew to his dear mistress, to make up for the lost love, he switched off and placed his affections on the master. It would be interesting to know why he did so, but the secret was never divulged.

A little later he made another long journey, to and through southern California, across the Mohave desert, in which he was nearly broiled, over the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains to Chicago and New York.

The cunning of the little fellow during that journey, in making for himself a small hole in the covering of his cage so he could keep a beady little round black eye on the proceedings from his perch, is well remembered. Also how he would lean his small body against the side of his cage to steady and rest himself from the motion of the train; and how he would cry out if the master was a moment away.

From New York he was brought back to Co-

## *Chapter XXII]*

lon, and it will thus be seen that as a traveler he had been quite a notable success. All this time it seemed as though his intelligence grew right along. Nothing appeared to escape his notice. It had long been the custom to take him from his cage, which he regarded his castle and defended with fierce wrath if interfered with, and to put him on the table at meal times, when he would take his place at the master's left hand, as regular as clockwork, to be fed. He would then roam the table over, taking note of and making intelligent comment, in bird language, about the fare provided. If a servant came to touch anything he would make a fierce rush to prevent it, and would show signs of hot anger. His bite was sharp, but could not draw blood. No stranger could come in without his alarmed cry. In this way he was as good as a watchdog. He was also most sympathetic, for whenever the master happened to sneeze or cough, day or night, Too-too would instantly follow suit in the funniest way. It was truly comical. And as for temper, real red-hot courage, there was never anything created to beat him. He would have fought a giant.

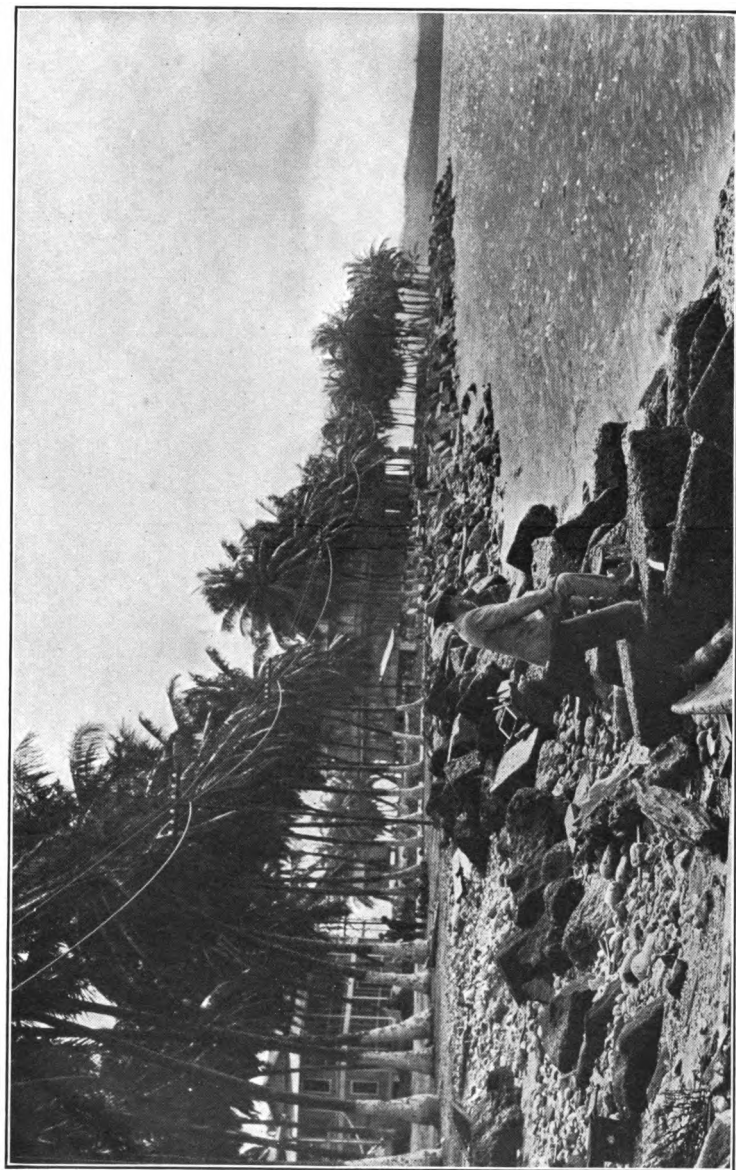
Thus seven swift years sped, and this atom of life became always more and more endeared. More and more his wonderful knowingness be-



came apparent, until the sad day on which a cruel accident took him away.

Being out of his cage for his matutinal tea and toast, as a member of the family, by strange ill-fortune he flew into some boiling hot milk, and was so injured that no effort could save him. For nine hours the brave little heart still beat, with now and then a cheery chirp of response to anxious care, as if to say—"I'm all right!" Nine hours of suffering, and then in the master's hand, against the master's heart, with a poor faint last flutter the little life was gone.

It may be thought silly to make so much of a mere pet bird, to wrap it when dead in soft white cotton and with an empty cigar box for coffin bury it in a tiny grave under the hibiscus tree, that will bear scarlet blossoms all the year, and with a tear bid it adieu; but not often is so much bright intelligence and beauty and pure affection found in any living thing. He was the Bird of birds; and if some day, far or near, his dear little bird-voice could be heard again saying, "Come in!" it would be delightful. And who knows?



Copyright, 1906, by J. C. Hemment.

**SEA-BEACH AT CRISTOBAL, 1906.**  
(Entrance to Panama Canal Around the Point.)



## CHAPTER XXIII

**J**OURNALISM, on the Isthmus as elsewhere, has played an important part in the affairs of the period under review. Its principal exponent has been the *Star and Herald*, for a long time owned and controlled by the brothers Archibald and James Boyd.

The first newspaper in English was the *Star*, of which I possess a facsimile of the first issue, published on February 24, 1849. A large number of gold seekers, bound for California, had been detained at Panama; and nothing was more natural than that they must have a newspaper to lighten the tedium of their enforced stay. The first number, although bearing date of February 24th, was intended to celebrate Washington's birthday; and a portrait of the Father of his Country, fairly good, though somewhat resembling the pictures of the Egyptian sphinx, adorns the head of the editorial column.

The editors and proprietors were J. B. Bidleman & Co., of whom it is impossible to say more, as they seem to have disappeared along with the

other Argonauts, who were "only waiting." The *Star*, however, became a permanency.

Soon afterwards another paper, called the *Herald*, was started; and about the year 1852 the two were united under the name *Star and Herald*. Archibald Boardman Boyd and Peyton Middleton were joint editors and proprietors. Later Mr. Middleton retired, and Mr. John Power, who died in 1864, was for a time associated with Mr. Boyd. Then in April, 1865, James Boyd joined his elder brother, and the two conducted the business until the sudden death of Archibald Boyd, in New York, on September 19, 1869, at the age of forty-three years. This unlooked-for event was widely regretted. It left Mr. James Boyd in sole possession, which he retained until his own lamented death, from small-pox, at Panama, on April 23, 1882.

The paper was then merged in a joint stock company, with the sons of Archibald Boyd, Frederick, Archibald, and Samuel, as the principal shareholders. More recently, Mr. J. Gabriel Duque became owner of the property, and has made a new company, which is now under his control as managing director.

Thus is briefly sketched the career of the most influential journal ever published on the Isthmus. It has for a long time been printed in Eng-

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lish and Spanish, to which for a while French was added.

Archibald and James Boyd were from Ireland, and were men of high standing, personal charm, and intellectual force. They both passed away in early manhood, leaving behind many sorrowing friends. They had been prosperous, for before cable days their publications were well known and eagerly sought. A leading journal called the *Spanish-American Manual*, in a notice of Archibald Boyd's death, in 1869, said:

“ These papers count their subscribers by thousands; and there is not a port from British Columbia to San Francisco, from San Francisco along the Mexican and Central American coasts to Panama, and from Panama along the coasts of the several countries south of it, in which the name of Boyd is not remembered as the genius who made the *Star and Herald* and *La Estrella* the medium for the transmission of the world's news to the countries lying on the two oceans. . . .”

The foregoing is strictly true. I speak from personal knowledge of the aims of the paper, as I had the honor to occupy the editorial chair of the English part for fifteen months, 1877 to

1879, under the proprietorship of Mr. James Boyd. He was not himself an editorial writer, but as I said in his obituary: "No man knew what *not* to say better than he." I was intimate with him, and it gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the many estimable qualities of his mind and character. He, as well as his elder brother, was endowed with courage of a high order, with intelligence, tact, courtesy, and business ability.

Nor can I forget my editorial confrère of those happy months—Don J. Luciano Duque, who had charge of the Spanish part of the paper, and with whom my relations were cordial and delightful. "Time can never lure remembrance" from him and his lovable qualities. His premature death seemed a cruel stroke.

Of my friend Crawford Douglas, who was connected with the paper for years, I have spoken in another place.

Other papers have been published in English in Panama—among them the *Chronicle*, edited by Mr. Isaac Lawton, who afterwards started the *South Pacific Times* at Callao—but they all failed.

At Colon a half dozen efforts have been made to establish the Fourth Estate on a living basis; but until Mr. J. W. Humphreys started his *Tel-*

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*egram*, in February, 1889 (just forty years later than the little *Star* of Panama), none were successful. The *Telegram* still lives, and in 1897 another paper called the *Starlet* made its appearance, under the patronage of the *Star and Herald* of Panama. They are both triweekly, and are regarded with favor. Another, the *Independent*, has been recently added.

The growth of literature among the Isthmian foreign colony has been retarded by a malady that may be called intellectual ophthalmia. The main chance having been the principal aim and object, nothing could be more natural than the absence of literary taste, ambition, or appreciation.

A few writers have made valuable contributions to local historical and descriptive literature: Dr. Robert Tomes, in 1855; C. T. Bidwell, in 1865; Dr. Berthold Seeman, in 1867; Dr. F. N. Otis, in 1867; and Dr. Wolfred Nelson, in 1888; but they were nonresident, or as in the case of Mr. Bidwell and Dr. Nelson, did not remain many years.

James Stanley Gilbert, whose death in 1906 was widely lamented, published a book of poems with the title, "Panama Patchwork," which reached a third edition, and was highly appreciated. He also contributed charming verse to



[*Panama*

periodical literature. Mr. Gilbert was gifted with intellectual wealth and with a rare genius for friendship. He has been called the Isthmian Kipling.

Mr. Michael Delevante also produced two volumes of poems which have met with appreciation. But as a general thing, the muse of the stylus has fought shy of the Isthmus.

Several brave attempts have been made to establish clubs of a social-literary-dramatic kind; yet until 1907, when the Y. M. C. A. came to the Canal zone, failure has been their sad unvarying lot.

But books, the hoarded gold of other minds, have found their way hither, and have said in their silent impressive way to the minority:

“Thou art not all unfriended!”

With books to the fore, one may bid the bickering world go hang!

Few of the ephemera of the daily press can be rescued from the capacious storehouse of oblivion. Perhaps they scarcely deserve to be. They are like a blown-out candle flame. My own editorial work on the *Star and Herald*, though conscientiously performed, now seems as if “writ in water.” One theme, however, upon which I have been prone to dilate, has not, in my estima-

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tion, grown old with the lapse of time. It is the Future Possibilities of the Tropics. It has seemed to me, and the conviction has grown stronger every year, that we have but faintly begun to apprehend the importance of the "hot countries" in the designs of destiny. I need not enter upon an argument in regard to the zone theory of biology, nor try to disprove the statements of writers who, in my opinion, have taken partial views. It is a pet idea in the United States and Europe that nothing of the first class—at any rate, of an intellectual nature—ever came, or ever will or can come from the equatorial regions of our earth. But never is a long time; and the fact that the realms where winter reigns for half the year have had a monopoly of intellectual products in the past is no reason in itself why it will always be so. The same may be said in regard to material welfare, which is the basis of civil society. The fact that the civilization of the past has had its principal development north of the Tropic of Cancer does not furnish a final argument that it must continue so forever.

For the present, and probably for a century to come, the United States will provide its increasing millions with their heart's desire in all that relates to material prosperity and comfort; but

there must be a limit. The conquest, begun when the Pilgrims landed in 1620, will one day be complete. The marvel of it! A continent overrun and redeemed from barbarism in so short a time! The rapid pace has been almost hysterical. Migration westward has been in reality at railroad speed. According to the careful estimate of Prof. Lewis M. Haupt, it will require only a little time to fill up the gaps; and when the census that will be taken in 1950 shows a population of nearly 239,000,000, the question will be asked (if not before) : Where are we to go now?

In August, 1880, I contributed the following to the *Star and Herald*:

“SOUTHWARD HO!”

“ On October 24, 1877, under the above heading, these columns contained some editorial remarks from which we copy as follows:

“ ‘ It is well known that upon the northern portion of the Western Hemisphere, during the last two hundred and fifty years, the human stream has been steadily setting with tremendous volume westward. From Plymouth Rock as a starting point, all the long distance to the Golden Gate, the flow has been rapid and continuous, until the whole vast region has been occupied by

### Chapter XXIII]

a new race drawn from the older sources. It would not be true to state that there is no room yet left for the expanding volume of the advancing stream; but it is certain that with the Pacific shores the goal of direct advance has been reached, and after a pause of greater or lesser duration, a great bend in the current must occur. And since the natural course lies only in one direction, and that to the southward, it must be only a question of time until Go South! will be as potent a watchword as the magical Westward Ho! has been in the past. Every year will witness more and more of those who, for purposes of various kinds, will turn their faces to the south, and never rest satisfied until they are established, for weal or woe, in these lands loved of the sun. In this manner the slow revolution of time will bring its changes, and millions will dwell in peace and prosperity in the tropics where now the jungle prevails.'

"These thoughts upon the future flow of population are now recalled by reading a very interesting paper on 'The Western Man,' by Charles Dudley Warner, in the current number of *Scribner's Monthly* (October, 1880). That close reasoner says: 'The Western Man, you perceive, has reached his limit. For the first time in the history of the world, he has come to a place

where he must stay his march, where he must rest. He has nowhere else to go!’

“Has not Mr. Warner fixed his usually discriminating gaze so intently upon the setting sun that he has lost sight of the whole magnificent Southern Continent? He seems to have overlooked a realm wider, grander, and of more unlimited possibilities for the future of his Western Man than has ever yet been occupied by that bold pioneer. A mighty bend in the stream of western civilization will occur, is already occurring, toward the south. In less than a thousand years from the present time, we venture to say, could we revisit the scenes of earth, we should see the wonderful activities of these same Western Men displayed in the central and southern portions of the continent. It will be only a question of time. These beautiful and productive regions will lure great masses and multitudes of men. There will be no need of haste or worry. These great changes must be the slow work of many generations, but they are inevitable.

“If the Western Man of the present has practically ceased to exist, because he has nowhere else to go, let him simply face about toward the South, and he will discover a world richer far than he has ever possessed or dreamed of. His mission will not be ended, or at least the possi-

### *Chapter XXIII]*

bilities before him will never be fully exhausted, until the Andes and the Amazon become as familiar as are now the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi. His destiny will lead him from the colder and more inhospitable North; and in ages to come, another and more perfect and enduring Eden will be found by his descendants, within the gorgeous Belt of Palms."

Thirty years have passed since the foregoing was written; and the conviction has been constantly strengthened that the tropics have been set apart for great things. It seems to me that Design may be clearly traced in this tendency. The evolution of mankind toward a higher destiny is involved. Certainly these magnificent countries, in which every possibility exists, have not been created and so richly endowed in vain.

In the New York *Sun* of March 24, 1895, in answer to the question: "Is this the Utopia of the Future?" Mr. John R. Spears writes from the Panama Isthmus:

"Bates, author of 'The Naturalist on the Amazons,' concludes his story by saying: 'For I hold the opinion that although humanity can reach an advanced state of culture only by battling with the inclemencies of Nature in high latitudes, it is under the equator alone that the per-

fect race of the future will attain to complete fruition.' ”

Mr. Spears adds: “ Some time people will begin to see that life where all one's days must be devoted to the mad scramble for money is a life not worth living. They will see that a life where a brief time only is needed to provide food and raiment, and much time remains for cultivating the intellect, is better. They will see that this is the ideal life, and will adopt it. This kind of life might be found in the tropics now. The people of the tropics do not lead such a life; they pass their spare time in idleness or the pursuit of sensual joys, until *ennuyéd* to desperation they kick up a revolution. But if the people of the temperate regions, who are weary of their strife for a mere living, could realize the possibilities that await them on the highlands that extend from Chiriqui on the Isthmus to the State of Oaxaca in Mexico, I fancy they would flock there in such numbers as to wipe out the traces of barbarism that still remain there, and bring to pass the condition of affairs which Bates foretold.”

Another and greater writer, Benjamin Kidd, in his “ Social Evolution,” says in regard to the same subject, “ with the filling up to the full limit the remaining territories suitable for Eu-

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ropean occupation, and the growing pressure of population therein, it may be expected that the inexpediency of allowing a great extent of territory in the richest region of the globe—that comprised within the tropics—to remain undeveloped, with its resources running largely to waste under the management of races of low social efficiency, will be brought home with ever-growing force to the minds of the Western (Northern?) peoples. The day is probably not far distant when, with the advance science is making, we shall recognize that it is in the tropics, and not in the temperate zones that we have the greatest food-producing and material-producing regions of the earth; that the natural highways of commerce in the world are those which run north and south; and that we have the highest possible interest in the proper development and efficient administration of the tropical regions, and in an exchange of products therewith on a far larger scale than has yet been attempted or imagined. . . .

“It will probably be made clear, and that at no distant date, that the last thing our civilization is likely to permanently tolerate is the wasting of the resources of the richest regions of the earth through lack of the elementary qualities of social efficiency in the races possessing them.”



The "energetic races" already recognize "the immense future importance of the tropical regions of the earth," and while the movement will be leisurely, it will at the same time be sure.

The former idea that the white race cannot safely venture within the hot countries, with a view to permanent residence, is already exploded. If the laws of health are observed, there is no more danger here than elsewhere. And if permitted to indulge in prophecy, I would say that it seems as clear as anything in the dim future can seem, that these lands have been reserved by Destiny, for the final flowering of the human tree. Since nothing appears to have been created in vain, the time will come when the wild region now included within the limits of the Panama Isthmus, as well as those immense solitudes north and south, shall be transformed into smiling summer lands where countless millions will find homes.

Prof. James Orton says, in his "Andes and the Amazon": "In South America Nature has framed her works on a gigantic scale. Where else combined do we see such a series of towering mountains, such a volume of river water, and such wide-spreading plains? We have no proper conception of Andean grandeur till we learn that the top of the tallest mountain in

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North America is nearly a mile beneath the dome of Chimborazo, nor any just view of the vast dimensions of the Amazonian Valley until we find that all the United States could be packed in it without touching its boundaries; nor any adequate idea of the Amazon itself, till we ascertain that it drains 1,000,000 square miles more than the Mississippi."

Similar quotations might be indefinitely multiplied, all going to show the magnificence of the equatorial inheritance that in the American hemisphere alone, awaits the white race. The acquisition of Porto Rico, Hawaii, the Philippines and Canal Zone has widened the outlook; and as science reveals her secrets more and more—especially when social science—the art of living—shall become known to all, there will be a tropical civilization so ideal that fancy falters in its contemplation.

The question of race, which now perplexes and lends a somber color to the vista, will, like all things else, be solved by the evolutionary forces that have brought humanity thus far on its way. And when we of to-day have been long gone into the Great Unknown, with perhaps, as many believe, the power of return given us, there may come a time when even we shall behold the splendor of this vision fulfilled.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### POSTSCRIPT

(*November, 1907*)

**T**HE preceding record does not pretend to cover the period, subsequent to November 3, 1903, the date of the Independence of Panama. All that has followed forms intensely interesting history, and will doubtless find a competent historian.

The events that led up to that crisis may, however, be briefly sketched as follows:

In July, 1900, the two political parties of Colombia, called Conservatives and Liberals, representing respectively the Bogota Government and the element of discontent in the republic, were engaged in a bloody civil war. Panama being a part of Colombia at the time, battles were fought at that city and along the line of railroad to Colon.

The Government of the United States was called on, under the treaty of 1846, to interpose. At last peace was secured through this friendly





**INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT AMADOR, CATHEDRAL  
PLAZA, FEBRUARY 20, 1904.**

## Chapter XXIV]

intervention, the so-called Conservatives being successful in putting down the Liberals. General Carlos Alban, who had become Governor of Panama, had been killed on board the steamship *Lautaro*, during a fight in Panama Bay, January 29, 1902, and General Victor Salazar had succeeded him as governor, on March 4th. The latter was soon replaced by Don Fecundo Mutis Duran, who in turn retired on the appointment of the patriotic senator, Don José Domingo de Obaldia, in October, 1903. He was the last to hold the office of Governor of Panama under the Republic of Colombia. After peace had been patched up, negotiations were commenced and carried forward between Washington and Bogota, until a canal treaty had been concluded by the representatives of the two nations. This covenant, known as the Hay-Herran treaty, was ratified without amendment by the United States Senate, March 17, 1903. It then lacked only the approval of Colombia. After months of uncertainty, that approval was refused.

Warnings without number had been given the Bogota Government that Panama would withdraw from the Colombian Union, unless the construction of a canal should be provided for. These warnings were unheeded.

Then on November 3, 1903, under the lead-

ership of Dr. Manuel Amador Guerrero and a few associates, prominent among whom were Frederico Boyd, José Augustin Arango, Tomas Arias, Manuel Espinosa, Dr. Esprilla, and Dr. Eusebio Morales at Panama, and indispensable Governor Porfirio Melendez, at Colon, the Department of Panama declared itself independent of Colombia.

Events followed in rapid succession, and within a week the Republic of Panama, with a well-organized *de facto* government under the protection of the United States, had been securely established. A bloodless revolution had been successful.

The details would afford material for a wonderful story.

Thereafter all has been plain sailing. A treaty that provided for opening the Panama Canal, was immediately made and signed, called the Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty, and promptly ratified by both governments. The great work is well under way.

It is to be regretted that sea level has not been adopted, as recommended by a large majority of the eminent engineers who were called on to examine the canal route and give their opinion, which it is perhaps not yet too late to follow. At sea level a channel once opened could be eventu-

## Chapter XXIV]

ally made into a wide, deep, open, splendid waterway from ocean to ocean, that for all time would be a veritable Straits of Panama. Considerations of time and cost ought not to mar the sublime conception. *But in any event, in spite of every obstacle and of every mistake, let us thank Heaven that there can be no longer a lingering doubt that*

### THE CANAL WILL BE MADE!

NOTE.—The International Advisory Board of Engineers who examined the Panama Canal in October, 1905, and decided almost unanimously in favor of sea-level, were:

MAJOR-GENERAL GEORGE W. DAVIS, U. S. A., Chairman.

CAPTAIN JOHN C. OAKES, U. S. A. Corps of Engineers, Secretary.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL HENRY L. ABBOTT, U. S. A., retired.

ADOLPH GUERARD, Inspector-General of Public Works, France.

EDOUARD M. QUELLENEC, Consulting Engineer Suez Canal, etc.

HENRY HUNTER, Engineer of Manchester Canal, England.

HERR EUGENE TINCAUSER, Engineer on the Kiel Canal, Germany.

J. W. WELCKER, Engineer Dyke System, Holland.

ISHAM RANDOLPH, Chief Engineer Chicago Drainage Canal.

FREDERICK P. STEARNS, Hydraulic Engineer, Boston.

PROF. WILLIAM H. BURR, Consulting Engineer, New York.

JOSEPH RIPLEY, Chief Engineer Sault Ste. Marie Canal.

ALFRED NOBLE, Chief of Pennsylvania Railroad Improvements, New York City.

WILLIAM B. PARSONS, Chief Engineer Subway System, New York.



## APPENDIX

### LIST OF OFFICERS OF THE PANAMA RAILROAD IN 1861

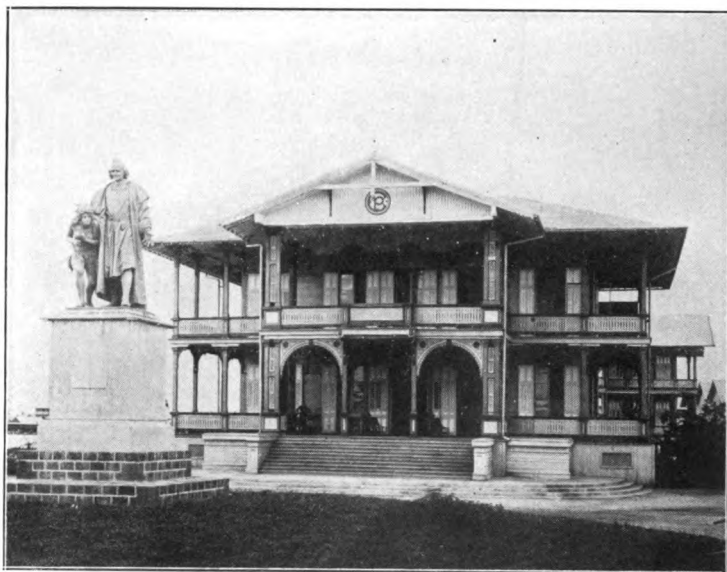
#### IN NEW YORK

DAVID HOADLEY.....*President.*  
JOSEPH F. JOY.....*Secretary.*  
HENRY SMITH .....*Treasurer.*  
JOHN KEELER.....*Chief Accountant and Head  
Bookkeeper.*

#### ON THE ISTHMUS

COLONEL GEORGE M. TOTTEN.*Chief Engineer.*  
WILLIAM PARKER.....*Superintendent.*  
CHARLES F. STEDMAN.....*Fiscal and Shipping Agent.*  
WILLIAM NELSON.....*Commercial Agent at Pan-  
ama*  
E. D. DENNIS.....*General Freight and Ticket  
Agent.*  
PEREZ TURNER.....*Assistant Engineer.*  
D. H. GUYON        }  
J. P. WOODBURY    }  
W. T. WHITE, M.D.....*Surgeon at Aspinwall.*  
J. P. KLUGE, M.D.....*Surgeon at Panama.*  
JOHN WILSON.....*Commissary.*





**LESSEPS VILLA (NOW CANAL OFFICES) AND STATUE OF  
COLUMBUS, CRISTOBAL, CANAL ZONE.**

## Appendix]

JOHN F. BATEMAN.....	<i>Master Mechanic.</i>
GEORGE WARDLE.....	<i>Freight Agent at Aspinwall.</i>
FRED ANSOATEGUE.....	<i>Freight Agent at Panama.</i>
P. P. PACHECO.....	<i>Attorney.</i>
C. F. LEE	}..... <i>Conductors.</i>
W. THOMSON	

## LIST OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF THE PANAMA RAILROAD

1852-1907

1. A. J. CENTER.....1852-1860, 8 years.
2. WILLIAM PARKER.....1860-1868, 8 “
3. E. C. DU BOIS.....1868-1872, 4 “
4. A. J. CENTER (2d term).....1872-1874, 2 “
5. { D. M. CORWINE }  
FRANK WHITE }.....1874-1876, 2 “  
AND OTHERS }
6. BRANDON MOZLEY.....1876-1880, 4. “
7. H. A. WOODS.....1880-1883, 3 “
8. J. J. IRIBE.....in 1883, 0.5 “
9. G. A. BURT.....1884-1885, 1.5 “
10. F. G. WARD.....1886-1887, 1.5 “
11. A. L. RIVES.....1887-1895, 8.5 “
12. J. R. SHALER.....1895-1903, 8 “
13. H. G. PRESCOTT
14. W. G. BIERD }.....1903-1907, 4 “
15. H. J. SLIFER }

55 years.

LIST OF ISTHMIAN CHIEF MAGISTRATES,

1855-1903

1. JUSTO AROSEMENA, Supreme Chief and Governor of the State, from July 16 to October 3, 1855.
2. FRANCISCO DE FABREGA, entrusted with the Executive Power, October 4, 1855 to September 30, 1856.
3. BARTOLOME CALVO, Governor of the State, October 1, 1856 to May 6, 1858.
4. RAMON GAMBOA, entrusted with the Executive Power, May 7 to September 30, 1858.
5. RAFAEL NUÑEZ, entrusted with the Executive Power, October 1 to November 1, 1858.
6. JOSÉ DE OBALDIA, Governor of the State, November 2, 1858 to September 30, 1860.
7. SANTIAGO DE LA GUARDIA, Governor of the State, October 1, 1860 to July 25, 1862.
8. MANUEL MARIA DIAZ, Provisional Governor, July 26, 1862 to July 5, 1863.
9. PEDRO GOITIA, entrusted with the Executive Power, July 6 to August 12, 1863.
10. PEREGRINO SANTACOLOMA, President of the State, August 13, 1863 to October 16, 1864.
11. LEONARDO CALANCHA, entrusted with the Executive Power, October 17, 1864 to March 9, 1865.
12. JIL COLUNJE, Provisional President, March 10, 1865 to September 30, 1866.
13. VICENTE OLARTE G., Governor of the State, October 1, 1866 to February 3, 1868.
14. JUAN JOSE DIAZ, entrusted with the Executive Power, February 4 to July 4, 1868.

## *Appendix]*

15. FERNANDO PONCE, Provisional President, July 5 to August 31, 1868.
16. BUENAVENTURA CORREOSO, Provisional and Constitutional President, September 1, 1868 to August 16, 1871.
17. JUAN MENDOSA, entrusted with the Executive Power, August 16 to September 30, 1871; and June 16 to August 28, 1872.
18. GABRIEL NEIRA, President of the State, October 1, 1872 to November 14, 1873.
19. GREGORIO MIRO, Constitutional President, November 16, 1873 to September 20, 1875.
20. PABLO AROSEMENA, President of the State, October 1 to October 11, 1875.
21. RAFAEL AIZPURU, Provisional and Constitutional President, October 12, 1875 to December 31, 1877.
22. BUENAVENTURA CORREOSO, President of the State, January 1 to December 28, 1878.
23. RICARDO CASORLA, entrusted with the Executive Power, December 29, 1878 to June 1, 1879.
24. GERARDO ORTEGA, entrusted with the Executive Power, June 8 to December 31, 1879.
25. DAMASO CERVERA, President of the State, January 1, 1880 to March 14, 1883; and May 1, 1883 to November 26, 1884.
26. JOSÉ MARIA VIVES LEON, entrusted with the Executive Power, March 15 to April 30, 1883; and November 27, 1884 to January 7, 1885.
27. RAMON SANTO DOMINGO VILA, President of the State, January 7 to February 16, 1885.

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28. PABLO AROSEMENA, entrusted with the Executive Power, February 16 to March 31, 1885.
  29. MIGUEL MONTOYA, Civil and Military Chief, May 1, 1885 to February 14, 1886.
  30. RAMON SANTO DOMINGO VILA, Civil and Military Governor, February 15 to July 5, 1886.
  31. MANUEL AMADOR GUERRERO, entrusted with the Civil and Military Government, June 5 to June 25, 1886.
  32. ALEJANDRO POSADA, Governor of the Department, June 26, 1886 to July 22, 1887; and January 21 to March 9, 1888.
  33. JUAN V. AYCARDI, Interim Governor, July 23, 1887 to January 20, 1888; and Governor of the Department, March 9, 1888 to August 31, 1893.
  34. RICARDO ARANGO, Governor of the Department, September 1, 1893, to his death, October 8, 1898.
  35. FACUNDO MUTIS-DURAN, Governor of the Department, October 9, 1898 to end of 1899.
  36. CAMPO SERRANO, Governor, January 2, 1900.
  37. CARLOS ALBAN,
  38. GENERAL SALAZAR,
  39. FACUNDO MUTIS DURAN,
  40. JOSÉ DOMINGO DE OBALDIA,
- } 1900-1903.

SEÑOR OBALDIA was the last Governor of Panama under the Republic of Colombia. At this date (November, 1907) he is Acting President of the Republic of Panama, in the absence in the United States and Europe, of President AMADOR GUERRERO.

## *Appendix]*

### STATEMENT OF BANANA SHIPMENTS FROM COLON

1888-1900

In 1889.....	216,528 bunches.
In 1890.....	264,295 “
In 1891.....	320,710 “
In 1892.....	397,881 “
In 1893.....	408,000 “
In 1894.....	420,000 “
In 1895.....	425,000 “
In 1896.....	304,200 “
In 1897.....	325,066 “
In 1898.....	319,465 “
In 1899.....	333,867 “
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Total.....	3,735,012 “

Banana culture has gradually declined since 1899 on the Isthmus, until shipments have been nearly suspended.

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### LIST OF UNITED STATES MINISTERS TO BOGOTA

1. BENJAMIN A. BIDLACK, Pennsylvania, Chargé d’Affaires, May 14, 1845.
2. THOMAS M. FOOTE, New York, Chargé d’Affaires, May 29, 1849.
3. SELVERTON P. KING, Georgia, Chargé d’Affaires, March 12, 1851.



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4. JAMES S. GREEN, Missouri, Chargé d'Affaires, May 24, 1853.
5. JAMES S. GREEN, Missouri (Credentials not presented), Minister Resident, June 29, 1854.
6. JAMES B. BOWLIN, Missouri, Minister Resident, December 13, 1854.
7. GEORGE W. JONES, Iowa, Minister Resident, March 8, 1859.
8. ALLEN A. BURTON, Kentucky, Minister Resident, May 29, 1861.
9. JAMES H. CAMPBELL, Pennsylvania (Declined), Minister Resident, November 16, 1866.
10. PETER J. SULLIVAN, Ohio, Minister Resident, March 19, 1867.
11. STEPHEN A. HURLBUT, Illinois, Minister Resident, April 22, 1869.
12. WILLIAM L. SCRUGGS, Georgia, Minister Resident, April 9, 1873.  
(Legation vacant for years.)
13. ERNEST DICHMAN, Wisconsin, Minister Resident, June 15, 1878.
14. GEORGE MANEY, Tennessee, Minister Resident, May 19, 1881.
15. WILLIAM L. SCRUGGS, Georgia, Minister Resident, April 17, 1882.
16. WILLIAM L. SCRUGGS, Georgia, Envoy Ex. and Minister Plen., July 7, 1884.
17. CHARLES D. JACOB, Kentucky, Envoy Ex. and Minister Plen., October 9, 1885.
18. D. H. MAURY, Virginia, Envoy Ex. and Minister Plen., October 18, 1886.

## *Appendix]*

19. JOHN T. ABBOTT, New Hampshire, Envoy Ex. and Minister Plen., April 1, 1889.
  20. L. F. MCKINNEY, New Hampshire, Envoy Ex. and Minister Plen., April 24, 1893.
  21. CHARLES BURDETT HART, West Virginia, Envoy Ex. and Minister Plen., May 27, 1897.
  22. ARTHUR M. BEAUPRÉ, February 12, 1903, to March 17, 1904.
  23. WILLIAM W. RUSSELL, March 17, 1904, to June 21, 1905.
  24. JOHN BARRETT, June 21, 1905, to January 9, 1907.
  25. THOMAS C. DAWSON, January 10, 1907—the present Minister, November, 1907.
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## LIST OF UNITED STATES MINISTERS TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

1. WM. I. BUCHANAN, 1903.
2. WM. W. RUSSELL, 1904.
3. JOHN BARRETT, 1905.
4. CHARLES E. MAGOON, 1905.
5. H. G. SQUIERS, 1906.

(The last named is still Minister, November, 1907.)

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## LIST OF UNITED STATES CONSULS AT PANAMA

1. WILLIAM NELSON, Kentucky, Consul, July 16, 1845.
2. AMOS B. CORWINE, Ohio, Consul, October 18, 1849.
3. THOMAS B. WARD, Texas, Consul, May 24, 1853.

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4. AMOS B. CORWINE, Ohio, Consul, August 16, 1856.
5. ALEX. R. MCKEE, Kentucky, Consul, May 15, 1861.
6. WILLIAM B. LITTLE, Nevada, Consul, October 3, 1865.
7. O. M. LONG, Texas, Consul, April 7, 1869.
8. JOHN M. WILSON, Ohio, Consul, April 3, 1879.
- \*9. WILLIAM L. SCRUGGS, Georgia, Consul, March 13, 1882.
10. THOMAS ADAMSON, Pennsylvania, Consul, April 17, 1882.
11. THOMAS ADAMSON, Pennsylvania, Consul General, August 1, 1884.
12. VICTOR VIFQUAIN, Nebraska, Consul General, April 20, 1893.
13. HEZEKIAH A. GUDGER, North Carolina, Consul General, July 29, 1897.
14. JOSEPH W. LEE, Consul General, 1905.
15. ARNOLD SHANKLIN, Kansas, Consul General, 1907.

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LIST OF UNITED STATES CONSULS AT COLON  
(ASPINWALL)

1. HENRY MUNRO, New York, Consul, May 5, 1852.
2. GEORGE W. FLETCHER, Alabama, Consul, July 23, 1853.
3. CHARLES J. FOX, Michigan, Consul, August 31, 1857.
4. DANIEL A. ROBINSON, Michigan, Consul, November 7, 1860.
5. F. W. RICE, California, Consul, January 14, 1861.
6. CHARLES E. PERRY, New York, Consul, April 16, 1869.

\* Mr. Scruggs did not serve.

## *Appendix]*

7. JAMES THORINGTON, Iowa, Consul, January 21, 1873.
  8. JAMES THORINGTON, Iowa, Commercial Agent, May 27, 1873.
  9. F. W. RICE, Maine, Consul, August 7, 1882.
  10. R. K. WRIGHT, JR., Pennsylvania, Consul, September 17, 1884.
  11. VICTOR VIFQUAIN, Nebraska, Consul, October 25, 1887.
  12. W. E. SIMS, Virginia, Consul, August 22, 1890.
  - \*13. CHARLES W. ERDMAN, Kentucky, Consul, August 13, 1891.
  14. W. W. ASHBY, Virginia, Consul, May 3, 1892.
  15. J. L. PEARCEY, Tennessee, Consul, October 10, 1893.
  16. W. W. ASHBY, Virginia, Consul. Second term.
  17. W. W. COBBS, Virginia, Consul, March 4, 1898.
  18. OSCAR MALMROS, 1903.
  19. (DR. KELLOGG, the present Consul, followed Mr. Malmros.)
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## LIST OF BRITISH CONSULS AT PANAMA

WILLIAM PERRY, Consul, 1850.

CHARLES HENDERSON, Consul, 1860-1868.

CHARLES WILTHEW, Consul, 1868-1873.

CAPTAIN HUGH MALLET, Consul, 1873-1879.

JAMES REGINALD GRAHAM, Consul (appointed in 1880, but did not proceed).

EDWARD BERNARD MARCH, Consul, 1880-1885.

HENRY GEORGE KENNEDY, Consul (appointed but did not proceed).

COLONEL JAMES HAYES SADLER, Consul, 1885.

\* Charles W. Erdman did not serve.

[*Panama*

GEORGE FREDERICK NICHOLAS BERESFORD ANNESLY,  
Consul, 1886.

LEWIS JOEL, Consul General, 1889.

CLAUDE COVENTRY MALLET, Consul, April 1, 1891 (until  
appointed Minister, 1907).

NOTE.—Claude C. Mallet, Courtenay W. Bennett, and Fred P. Leay served as British Vice-Consuls at Panama. The first of these remarkable men is now British Minister at Panama, and the other two are Consuls General, at New York and Valparaiso, respectively.

RAINFALL AT COLON 1890-1899

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FIVE YEARS PRIOR TO 1895

1890.....	152.75 inches.
1891.....	124.75 “
1892.....	145.03 “
1893.....	131.90 “
1894.....	153.76 “

	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899
	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches
January.....	3.85	4.02	3.41	5.02	6.91
February.....	1.09	1.30	0.20	0.35	6.52
March.....	2.08	1.99	0.28	1.57	1.25
April.....	22.36	9.02	3.72	4.71	0.59
May.....	16.17	16.48	16.35	12.83	13.90
June.....	9.25	8.60	18.82	16.37	6.40
July.....	17.10	13.58	14.07	21.90	27.66
August.....	14.15	15.51	17.23	10.91	14.79
September.....	12.11	12.83	17.19	10.27	16.54
October.....	16.47	14.00	5.84	11.36	15.03
November.....	20.49	15.63	22.16	12.58	16.79
December.....	15.70	18.66	18.93	7.95	9.04
Total.....	150.82	131.62	138.20	115.82	135.42

Average for the ten years, 1890-1899, 138.0 inches.













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